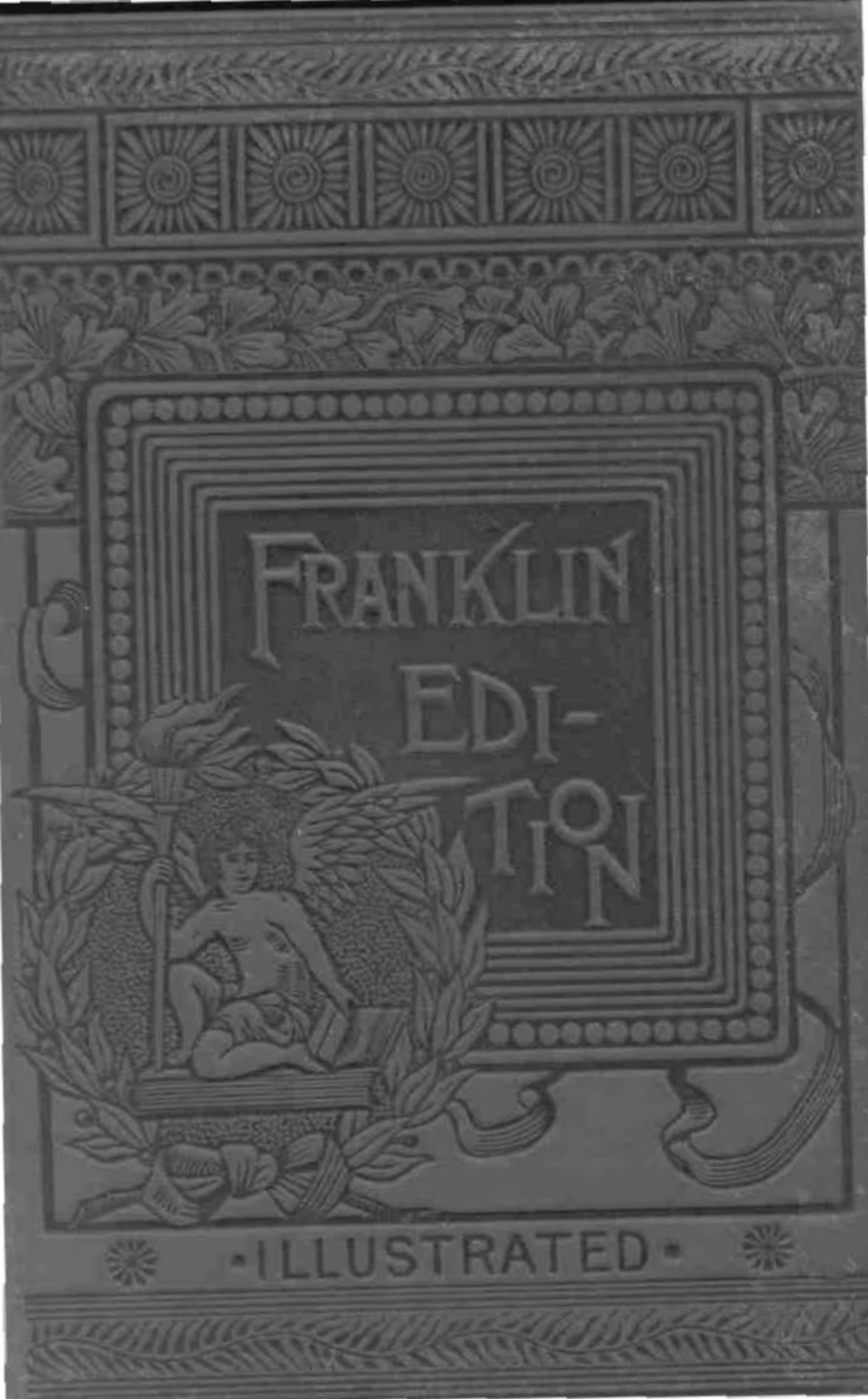

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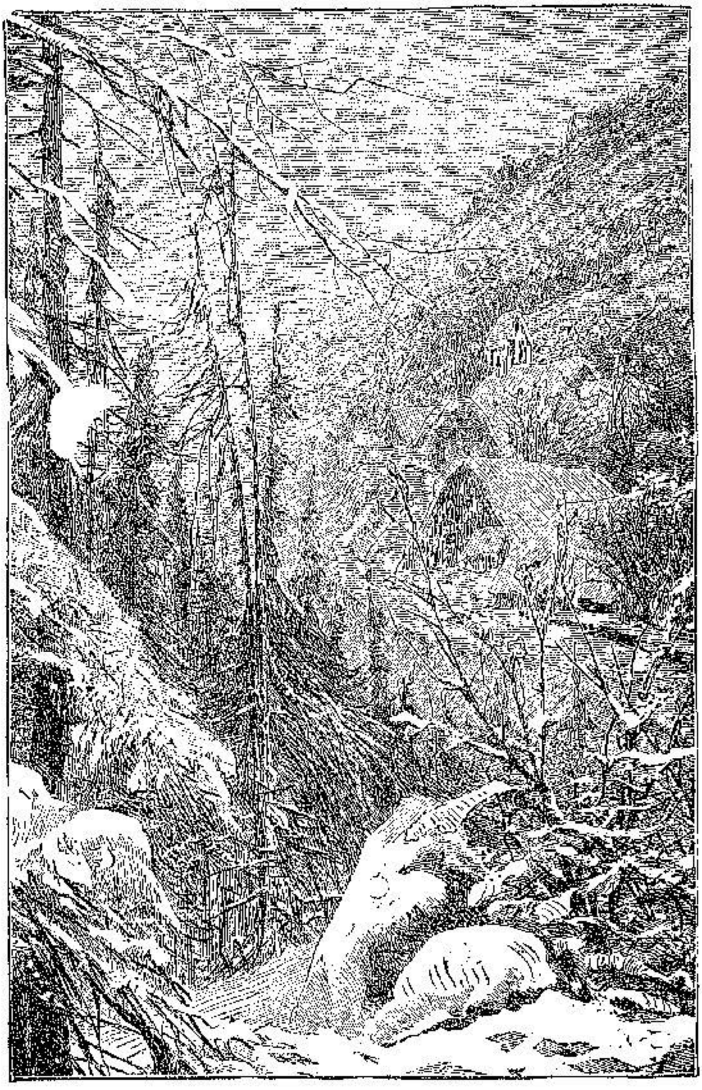


HAPPY WINTER

IN

FLORIDA

BY

MRS. S. S. ROBBINS

AUTHOR OF "MY NEW HOME,"
ETC.

NEW YORK
WORTHINGTON CO., 747 BROADWAY
1888

To Miss Mather,

WHOSE KINDNESS MADE OUR WINTER THE "ONE HAPPY WINTER," THIS LITTLE BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY

The Author.

CONTENTS.

Chapter. Page.

I. GOING TO FLORIDA, ... 7

II. MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR THE TRIP, 17

III. SIGHT SEEING. 30

IV. DISTRESSED BY POLITICS, . . . 40

V. RAILROAD INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS, . 51

VI. WELCOME TO FLORIDA, ... 70

VII. GOING TO ST. AUGUSTINE, . . . 95

VIII. MAGGIE TAKES A RIDE, . . . 114

IX. CHRISTMAS IN FLORIDA, ... 125

X. PATIENCE SHOWS MR. ATWOOD'S GARDEN, 142

XI. FORT MARION AND THE DUNGEON, . . 155

XII. CHARLIE AND JUAN ACT AS SHOW-MEN, 172

XIII. THE SAIL TO ANASTASIA ISLAND, . . 186

XIV. MAGGIE'S JOURNAL TELLS STORIES, . 202

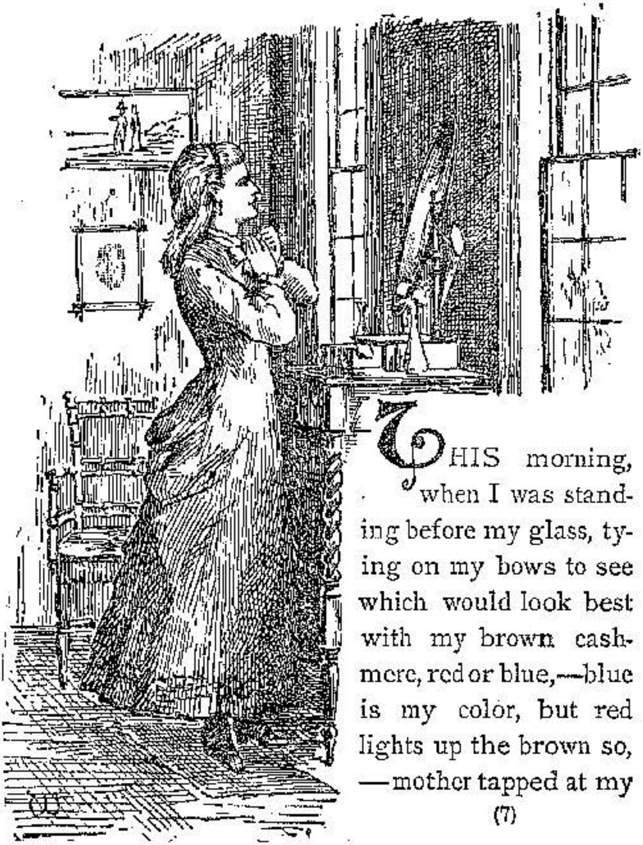
XV. ALLIGATOR HUNT, ... 216

XVI. FAREWELL, FLORIDA, ... 228

ONE HAPPY WINTER.

CHAPTER I.

GOING TO FLORIDA.



THIS morning, when I was standing before my glass, tying on my bows to see which would look best with my brown cashmere, red or blue,—blue is my color, but red lights up the brown so,—mother tapped at my door. I never doubt who it is when she taps. Of course, I asked her about the bows, and she came to the glass, and was as patient as a lamb while I tried them both on, but something about the smile wasn't just right, so I put the blue one (that was her choice) on crooked. Then I just threw my arms around her neck and said, "Mother, what is it? I haven't done anything wrong, have I?" She put her cheek on mine, — not a girl's I know is half so soft and fine feeling, and then she said, "Maggie, how should you like to go to Florida, this winter?"

"Florida, oh you dear, darling, sweet old mamma!" I said, hugging and kissing her, twenty times in a minute; "why, it would be just magnificently splendid! Who with?"

"With your sister, Hannah, and me."

Now when mother says "your sister," I always know there is something serious, and so I asked,—

"Is anything the matter?"

"Don't be frightened," she said, leaning her cheek on mine again. "Greta is sick, but the doctor says it only needs a winter in Florida to make her well. I take you to be company for her, and because," with her dear, wise smile, "I don't like to leave you at home."

"I wouldn't be left," I said rather roughly; "I would go if I got into Greta's Saratoga trunk, and you shut the lid down. Left! why it would be perfectly awful!"

"Perfectly awful," repeated my mother; "I wish you would stop using such expressions, Maggie; really they sound so ill-bred, I shall be ashamed to take you among strangers."

"I'll be the very pink of propriety; I'll never say a big word or a slang word, or think a big thought or a slang thought; I'll be such a lady that everybody will say, 'What a lady that girl must have for her mother?'"

Mother laughed her own laugh this time, so I just pulled her down into my lap — I am taller than she is now, by half an inch — and then I made her tell me all about it. Dr. Inches said Greta was just in a place where she would be liable to become worse, in the shut-up, cold, dismal, northern winter, but if she were in the perpetual summer of the semi-tropics, she could easily and wholly recover. I've seen a cloud hanging over us all the fall, but didn't suppose it was from that little hacking cough Greta has; it is not half as bad as mine when I have an influenza; then, mother says, I might be heard barking half over the city, but it never seems to worry her. Well, the long and the short of it is, that we are to go to Florida — mother, Greta, Hannah and Maggie. Hannah is busier than a whole hive of bees, but then she is always busy. I more than half wish she was not going, she is so — so fussy; everything has to be done ship-shape to please her. Never in my whole life did I even dust my bureau in a way that she thoroughly approved; but, thank fate, I shan't have any room to take charge of in Florida, for I believe they live out of doors there all the time, sleeping under orange trees, covered by banana leaves, with fresh roses for pillows, and mocking birds to sing folks to sleep. Hannah has always been with us; she is a sort of family right-hand man, and mother thinks she can't live an hour without her; beside, I suppose it would break her heart to be left, as much as it would mine, so it's all right. I wish she would be a little more respectful, though, and say Miss Margaret, instead of calling me "Maggie" before folks. I hope she will pass for a poor relation, and not for a hired woman; and she does belong to us, though I don't think there is any great family resemblance between her and my mother. Her nose is one half of her face, and her mouth the other, whereas my mother is the handsomest woman in the world! Etta Park says her mother is, but Etta is very much mistaken, she is not really a beauty, and every one who knew my mother when she was younger than she is now, says a handsomer bride never stood before the altar.

Well, all this is neither here nor there, I suppose, and if I am to write a diary of my winter South, I had better keep right about it. Greta would say this was all you could expect from such a flibberti-gibbet as I am; but Greta is eighteen, and I only fourteen;

by the time I am as old as she is I shall be as sober, especially if I have a little bit of a hack.

I am writing this diary as I took notes of Miss Palmer's lectures, to methodize the information I receive and have it ready for use. Mother says if I will intelligently and thoughtfully observe all the new things I shall see and hear, it will be equal to a year's good hard study in the development of my mind and character. To tell the honest truth, I am tired to death of developments of mind and character, and only want to have a grand good time. I wish we could come into the world ready made, and were not forever preparing and preparing and preparing for our future. I should like to write in this diary whatever I want to, but if I don't make it proper, dot all my i's and cross my t's, then mother will say, "Maggie, dear, shouldn't you like to let me see your diary?" But if it's all ship-shape, she seems to know it by a kind of intuition, and don't want to look at it. It's just so with my drawers and boxes: when they are in perfect order, and I want to show them off, she never seems to know I own any; but let me be in a hurry and turn them topsy-turvy, then up she comes, and her dear face looks so grieved, I just have to go about with a hundred-pound weight on my heart all the rest of the day. So, old diary, if you please, you will behave yourself, and not admit a word within your pages that is not just right.

I forgot to put any date to this. I am always forgetting something, but I began to write on the eighth day of October, 1875.

October 10.—There, I remembered it this time. Yesterday I went all around among the girls to tell them what a splendid thing had happened to me, and they seemed to envy me, all but Julia Moore; she said she wondered at me: I seemed as elated as if nothing was the matter with Greta; for her part, she had rather stay at home with her sister well, than go to the garden of Eden with her sick. I tried to explain to her that Greta wasn't sick, only had a little hack, but she said that was just the way the worst consumptions came on, and was I goose enough not to see that my sister wouldn't have been sent to Florida in such a hurry without there was a serious cause? I came home crying as if my heart was broken, but when I went into the library to find mother and ask her about it, there sat Greta, winding a ball of scarlet worsted, and Rex would keep snapping at it every time he got a chance; so between Greta's merry laughs and the dog and the bright worsted, I forgot all about it. Nobody ever would laugh so over trifles if she was going to die, I am sure of that, and Julia Moore will have to find some one less sensible than I am, if she wants to have her croakings believed. I couldn't help, however, following mother; when she went into the kitchen I pushed her into the pantry and shut the door, then I whispered to her what Julia had said, and she looked dreadfully troubled for a moment, but pretty soon she whispered back:—

"It is just as I have told you, Maggie; there is no serious reason for alarm if we are in Florida; there might be here. We will hope for the best."

But all the afternoon mother did not look quite like herself, and I'll never tell her again what Julia Moore says, to the last day of my life.

To-morrow I am to leave school; father says it's foolish for me to try to study with my head so full of other things; it only induces bad habits. So many occasions for bad habits and so few for good, what a queer kind of a world this is! But I am glad not to go to school any more; Kate Friends was getting above me in the algebra, and that would never do. When a girl has always marked among the nineties she don't want to come down.

Oct. 11.—Miss Weston gave me a little keepsake when I came away from school last night. I am dying to know what it is, but she made me promise I wouldn't open it until New Year's. Only think how different every thing will be then. I may open it under "my own vine and fig tree," literally. Father came home last night with his hands full of books on Florida; he says he wants me to study them over thoroughly, and make an entry of the most important facts with regard to the State, in my diary. He laughed at first when I told him about it and asked him to bring me home some volumes of blank books that would be a handy size, but now, I imagine, he has grown to respect it more, for hardly a day passes but he reminds me of something I should be sure to put into a note; but if he really does expect a girl's private journal to be as instructive or as methodical as a "Universal Teacher," then he is mistaken.

To-day we have had dress-makers at the house. We are to go prepared for the four seasons, and are even to take our furs — furs under a tropical sun; what nonsense! but so Mrs. Hopkins said, and Mrs. Hopkins's husband's brother's wife went once to Florida, and half froze for want of them. If it is so cold I don't see any good that is to come out of our going, but I don't believe a word of it. How would oranges and lemons behave themselves, I should like to know, if they were to be nipt with the frost?

Hannah really grows poor, she has so much to do. I said so to mother to-day, and her reply was, "Then, Maggie, try to help her all you can." My mother is very queer; she never lets us sentimentalize over any thing or anybody, she always turns off a remark of the kind I made with something very practical. It sounds as if she said, "Maggie, I am very glad you can see that Hannah is tired, but instead of satisfying yourself with noticing it and appearing to feel sorry, take right hold and do the first thing you are able to that will really help her." I feel ashamed not to, but it isn't always agreeable. It wasn't at all so with Hannah. She was ripping a skirt of mine that is to be let down,—I am always having to have things let down,—and when I asked her if I could do it, she just looked at me over her glasses, and said, "I want to have it done before we go to Florida." That is what Greta would call an insinuation, and I am sure I don't always deserve it, for sometimes I do a thing right off. However, I saw Alice Thornton coming up the street for a call, and she stays forever, so I left Hannah, and Alice and I had a long talk over it all, in the library, by ourselves. I am to write Alice every Tuesday for the winter, and she is to write me every Friday. I hope she will be punctual.

Oct. 14.—Mother has set me to work in earnest for the last two days. Such heaps of stitches as I have had to take, and the trotting! One would think my feet and legs were made of cast iron, and only had to be wound up to go all day without stopping. If we were up-stairs every thing was down, and if we were down-stairs every thing was up. Besides, Greta has coughed more; "the wind 's east," mother says, and when the wind 's east, and she coughs, we all look as if our last day had come, and the funeral processions of the whole family were ready to move from our door. It's perfectly delightful to go to Florida, but not to have Greta need to go. Hannah says "there is always a bitter drop in everybody's cup," and I suppose this is ours. There is a little scrap of bitter, too, in getting so tired that you ache all over like the toothache, and yet don't want to complain. I wish we could have one suit of clothes, as the gentlemen do, and roll up a scrap of a bundle with a clean collar and a pair of cuffs inside, which we could carry on our backs. When I travel around the world that is the way I shall go.

CHAPTER II.

MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR THE TRIP.

WE have been reading up Florida all day. I never had thought of it before, except as a long, narrow, Southern State, easily bounded because it had so much water round it. Now I find it was the first land discovered in America, — that Sebastian Cabot came over in 1497, and there it was. I suppose Mr. Cabot would have had some interesting stories to tell me, if I could have just sat down by him and asked for them; but, as it is, I don't find anything to make a note of until I come to Ponce de Leon; there was a Spaniard that is worth writing about. Imagine — but I forget, that is the very thing my father don't want me to do. Well, Florida once included all the land — or one of its dis coverers claimed that it did—from Cape Hatteras, on the north, beyond the Mississippi, on the west. Think of that, will you, and then of the number of States we make of the land now! Florida proper, however, was only a collection of coral reefs and an accumulation of fragments of shell and coral between those reefs; so I suppose, if we should dig 'way down, we should come to coral, and could break off and bring away as many fine bits as we pleased. It will at any rate be well worth remembering, and trying, when we go. There is something so romantic in just living over shells and coral, and not the common old brown earth, as we do here.

In 1512, my hero,—only he was old,—Juan Ponce de Leon, came over to America in search of a fountain that would make him young again. I suppose he had spent his whole life hunting around Spain in vain, and thought that where no one ever had looked before, there was hope. Well, the poetry of the story is, that he landed on Easter Sunday, in April. The first things he saw when he came on shore were beautiful flowers, not a few in old gardens, as he used to see them in Spain, but by the hundreds and the thousands. He remembered that the day at home was called Pascua Florida, so he just took the last word, Florida, and the land was named. Wasn't that a dear old man, with so much poetry left in him? And I am going to Florida, this land of flowers, to spend the whole winter! Greta is better to-day; she hasn't coughed twice — the wind is west, — and we are all happy. I told Hannah I meant to go up and tie the vane there, but she only made that queer noise she does when a thing seems supremely silly to her. I don't think Hannah will ever find anybody good and wise enough to suit her, until she goes to heaven, and, even then, the angels will have to be careful and not have their feathers rumpled — but this isn't Florida.

There were Indians settled all over Florida, and fighting began at once. I don't blame them. How should we Massachusetts people feel, I should like to know, if black men should come sailing into Boston harbor, and say to us, "Look here, this is a nice-looking place, I want to come here to live; you just take up your duds [duds isn't a good word, but you will excuse it] and march off somewhere else." Do you suppose we should go? I trow not; and anybody else may blame the Indians for all the fighting they did, if they please, I wont, though I am sorry they killed this Ponce de Leon. I wish he were living in Florida now, so I could go up and say "thank you" for the pretty name, as soon as I got there. There is no end to the adventurers who came over from Europe and laid claim to this State. I suppose I ought to write down the names, but I shall never remember them even if I do. There was De

Soto, who found Tampa Bay, and claimed so much land; and then there was John Ribault, who brought over a company of Huguenots, and sailed up the St. John's River. Every man who saw anything claimed it. St. Augustine seems to have been the place particularly thought worthy of squabbling over, and mother says we are to go to St. Augustine, perhaps, for the winter. There, that will do. I 've written when Florida was discovered, and by whom, and now I had rather fill in after we get there; beside, I 've engaged to go to tea with Nell Grant, and my best dress wants a new frill put into the neck. I don't suppose this diary is made to write such little things in, but never mind. Diary sounds very old-fashioned, like those Sabbath-school books we have a few left of in our library. I never can bear to get one of them, they always seem to me as if the people who wrote them tried their best to say the very worst things they could about themselves. I should think what mother tells me so often would apply excellently well to them. I had a habit of doing just what I wanted to, and if it wasn't quite right, of saying, "I ought not to, please forgive me," and my mother said that was all wrong; the way was not to do a thing if you were not perfectly sure it was right. You couldn't make amends by saying, Forgive me. But this isn't about Florida, and Greta said I should get every thing else in the world into my journal — yes, I like that name better, so, for the future, it shall be journal.

October 18.—Perfectly magnificent! Mother has had a letter from an old school friend of hers, in New York,—only think of my mother ever having been young and having had school friends,—who says she is going to Florida, too, this winter. She writes to ask if we can't go together. Now, there is one serious drawback to this—she has only three boys, not a girl among them; and a boy I utterly and thoroughly abhor. I never forget in my prayers to return thanks that I have no brothers; they are the plague of a girl's life. There's Bob Stone—Amy never has a moment's comfort when he is round. He is always tormenting her. Think of his holding up her kitten by its tail, and giving her long braid a twitch every time he goes past her. He is full of mischief, not the kind a girl likes, but a plaguing kind, that is too provoking. If he were my brother, I should hate him. And then there's Charlie Shafton. I like Charlie better than I do Bob, but that is not saying much, for he's a dunce; most boys are dunces, I believe, though Ted Stone leads the school, and marks 'way above me, but that is nothing very great. I don't set up for a genius. *Three boys*—it's perfectly appalling! I shall be on my reserved dignity and, thank fate, it is the *city* of St. Augustine, so, if we go there, there will be plenty of room for us to lead our separate lives. Mother says the boys' names are—Phil, aged nineteen. He ought to be a man, and know how to behave himself; but boys of that age are just beginning to have a moustache, and they keep pulling it so, and looking you in the face, as if they would like to say, "See here, don't you wish you were a man, you poor, little, wee bit of a woman, you?" Then there's Herbert. Herbert is a good name; I always liked it—if it was only a girl's name, I should admire it; but this Herbert, he's 'most fifteen, only a little older than I am, and the way he will patronize me! It makes me angry just to think of it. Paul French is 'most fifteen, and he offered me his arm the other night coming home from Mabel Strong's party, just as if I was afraid to come home alone—there, I am afraid that wasn't quite honest, and I don't mean to write anything that isn't strictly true, black and blue. I know young gentlemen do offer their arms to young ladies because it is a polite custom, and I guess I wasn't as angry at Paul as I made believe. I was when Greta laughed at me. I can't bear to be laughed at; and if this Herbert takes to doing any such things, it will just keep me nervous all the time, and Hannah says I never appear well when I am nervous. I wish there wasn't such a word in the English language. Stanhope is the third one. He's little, only six. I presume we shall have to be thoughtful and look after him, as if he were a baby; that's the way the elder ones always do when there is such a difference. His mother goes South on his account; he has some trouble with the spine, and spinal disease always makes children fretful, so there will be a cross big baby to tug along everywhere; and it will be "Maggie, where's Stanhope?" all the time; or mother will whisper to me, "Maggie, dear, can't you contrive some little play that will make Stanhope happy?" Mother is always wanting to make somebody happy, and once in a while I get tired of it, for nobody ever seems to take any special pains to make me so. There, I will write that last sentence all over backwards. Mother does a great deal to make me happy, and Greta held a skein of worsted for me yesterday, when she was so interested in her book and didn't want to stop; but then, Greta is an angel, and it don't cost her as much to do things for others as it does some one I know, who shall be unmentioned. So the long and the short of it is, that if Mrs. Trehorne goes South, she will be perfectly splendid, mother says she is; and the boys will be perfectly awful.

Oct. 22.—It is all settled now; we are to start from here the day after Thanksgiving, and make our way leisurely south. Mrs. Trehorne is to go with us; we take her up in New York, and St. Augustine is to be our winter's destination. There is some talk of our taking a house there together, and making one family,—and if it were not for the boys, it would be just charming; but fancy being shut up in the house with three savages! I must read a little more studiously about Florida, for I dare say they won't know a thing, boys are always so ignorant,— all but Fred Stone, he is the only smart one I ever knew,— and I must learn a few more new tunes on the piano. If any of those boys should be able to sing as Elliott Grant does, we could have some music on rainy days. I have put up all my drawing materials. I shall be glad to get away from the noise, out-of-doors, once in a while, I am sure; then I can sketch from nature, though my portraiture is not always exact. I know, when I drew Belden's Falls, and showed it to my father, he said: "Well, Maggie, I have no doubt that would be very good, if I only knew what it was." I couldn't help laughing; but it hurt my feelings all the same, and I tore the picture right up. I shouldn't like to have my feelings hurt in St. Augustine, for I am only going to have a grand good time, or should be, if it were not for those hateful three boys — *three* whole boys; only think of it!

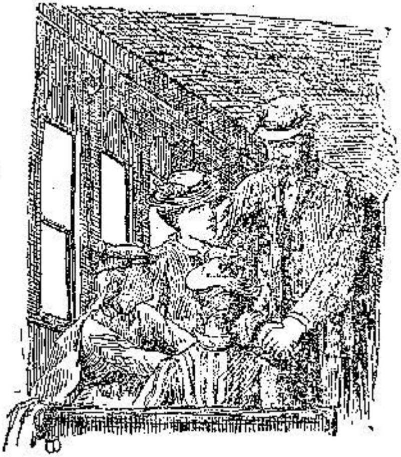
November 6. — There was nothing particular to put in my journal for the last few days, so I haven't written. Father brings home something new about Florida every day, and insists that I shall attend to the reading. I like to hear about the hunting and the birds, flowers and oranges; but for the history, it has been nothing but fights — fights — fights! white people fighting each other because they were not of the same religion, and the poor Indians killing both parties as fast as they could get a chance. These seem very exciting Indian stories, but I prefer not to put them down in my journal until I stand upon the spots where they happened.

I am going to see no end of black babies; and as I have never seen one in my life, I expect to be very much amused. Florida was, of course, a slave State until the Emancipation act. I heard mother ask father, to-day, if he supposed the Southerners bore the Northeners any ill-will for all that happened during the civil war, and father said probably they did, and he should prefer not to discuss these times with them; but he thought they were too poor, and too dependent upon the Northeners for the money they brought them, to do any harm.

I never dreamed before of being frightened, but suppose they should rise upon us, and cut all our throats, — boys and all! Only think what a horrid butchery it would be! St. Augustine seems to me to have been nothing but a vast slaughter-house from the first of its settlement. I mean to ask father to have my life insured before I go, so, if anything should happen, some one would be the better for it. We are almost ready now. Mother has had some new summer dresses made for me; only think of that, to have light, thin clothes made up for winter use.

Nov. 17. — To-morrow is Thanksgiving, and the next day we go. I have been all around to-day to say good-by to my friends. It is a very solemn occasion.

Nov. 18.—We have had a nice dinner to-day, and though I didn't mean to enjoy it at all, as it was to be my last at home, I was very hungry, and did eat a little more than usual, for which I am mortified.



Nov. 30.—We leave in the night train for New York. The next time I open my journal, under what different circumstances it will be!

December 1.—On board the cars, I am scratching with a pencil, but I can write this all over by and by. Here we are—*off!* I had to cry a little when I said good-by to my father, — for I do love him very, *very*, VERY dearly, and we are leaving him all alone, — but Hannah just pulled me away, and scolded me. She said: "Hadn't I sense enough to see how tried my mother was, to start off alone, with a child as sick as Greta was, and couldn't I behave myself? If I couldn't, she wished I had been left at home." Now, I think this was unjust in Hannah, but she is always scolding me for something. Mother didn't seem tried in the least; she looked as smiling and quiet as possible when she kissed father good-by; and Greta didn't seem sick, though I caught her with her head buried in her traveling-bag, pretending to look for something, but really to wipe away her tears. I like my way of crying right out, and using my handkerchief before folks, a great deal better; it seems honester. — There, what a lurch that was! But it don't matter, I can ink it all straight.

I never was in a sleeping car before, and I am free to confess it isn't what I thought it would be. "Pullman palace-car!" What a sounding name it is! I have traveled in the drawing-room cars in the day, but I expected something a great deal finer here. I read once a description of some queen's sleeping room, and of course if this was a palace car I didn't see why it shouldn't be somewhere near as handsome. It has row after row of berths, one above the other, like the berths on board a steamboat. I am No. 9, and Hannah is my berth-mate, and she pokes her head, with a frilled night cap, over the side of her berth, pulls my curtain apart, and says —

"Go to bed, Maggie Ware; don't you know better than to be keeping a whole car full of people awake, scratching with your pencil so?" Now my pencil has a soft lead, and makes no noise, but Hannah has a way of snapping me up that I am afraid even going to Florida may not cure her of; and only think! what if she should do so before those boys. I must talk with mother, and ask her to interfere. But this ends me for to-night, and I meant to have written an hour longer. I should wish Hannah were left at home, if it were not that mother needs her so much.

Dec. 2. Wasn't it fun, though, on board those cars! Before I could get to sleep the snoring began, and such a noise! There was a tenor snore just behind me, there was a bass snore just before me, alto at the right, and contralto at the left. I tried not to laugh so any body would hear me, but pretty soon mother opened my curtains and said —

"Maggie, dear, what is it amuses you so?"

"Hark, mother!" and I held up my finger to make her listen. Then she began to laugh too, and said it was always so on the sleeping-cars; I had better go to sleep and not mind it. She spoke to Hannah, and Hannah said something about "that child," by which I suppose she had been finding fault with me, so I said my cradle hymn over and over again, and watched the tassels on my Nubia swing back and forth, back and forth from the hook where I had hung it, over my bed, until I suppose I went to sleep, for the next thing I knew Hannah was shaking me. "Wake up," she said, "we are in New York."

You don't suppose, even in the bustle of getting off, I forgot to look for the deep bass, do you? And who do you think it was? As true as can be, it was a rather delicate-looking woman. I felt sure it would be a great fat man. I was so busy recognizing the snorers that I forgot half the things I had put into my berth, and here Hannah was really useful. She packed them without a word of scolding. I was sorry to have made her so much trouble, and will try to be more thoughtful next time.

I have written all this while we are in the station waiting for Mrs. Trehorne and those fearful boys to come. I am afraid I shall have but little time afterwards.

CHAPTER III.

SIGHT SEEING.

THEY are all here, and we are in Philadelphia. We spend the night here. Neither Mrs. Trehorne nor mother wish to travel fast. We are to rest from time to time, seeing all we can on our way. I have been in Philadelphia before, so am not crazy to go about and rush around, as these boys are. Yes, they are here, and no words of mine can picture the fearfulness of our situation. Phil is taller even than Greta, and never moves away from his mother's side, or speaks to any one else. I, for one, don't call that very polite; and as for Herbert, no fear of his ever offering me his arm. He sits on the other side of the car, and though he did buy an orange of the fruit man, and offer it to me, of course I declined it.

Stanhope is a darling; he has long, light curls, and big blue eyes, just like a wax doll's, only they don't look like them in the least, — and he is just as full of fun as he can hold. We have played cat's cradle, and he can make all sorts of queer things out of his fingers, by twisting them round. He showed me how to make an old man with a shawl on his shoulder, out of my handkerchief. Mother needn't tell me to amuse him, for he is my favorite of the whole party, though Mrs. Trehorne is very nice, and kissed me when she met me, real lovingly. I wanted to put my arms around her neck and kiss her over again, she had on such a beautiful traveling bonnet, but I was afraid it wouldn't be quite proper.

We are getting on well; Greta coughs less, and has spoken several times to Phil Trehorne. Wouldn't it be nice if they would get up a sort of love affair! They might as well, you know, for he is taller than she is, and everybody loves Greta. Mother is calling me now. She says, if I would like, I may go with Mrs. Trehorne and the boys to see the Centennial grounds. I shall like to go with Mrs. Trehorne, but those boys! However, I suppose I must do as my mother says.

Home from the Centennial grounds. Nothing is completed, but everything is wonderful. Phil sat down when he came back, and told Greta all about it. That is just as it should be. I thought they looked very prettily, sitting and talking together. On the whole, the boys behaved well. I was on my dignity and walked close by Mrs. Trehorne's side, all but once, when she said—

"Maggie, go with Herbert and take a peep into that new building over there." We ran a little, and Herbert dared me to wade through a brook we had to pass. Now I never did or would allow myself to be dared, in all my life, so I meant to step daintily over on the top of some white rocks I saw, but I stepped off, and then I splashed through just as he did. It wasn't deep, and my dresses are short, so all I wet was my feet; and if that abominable Hannah don't take up my boots to-night and find it out, they will be dry in the morning, and no one the wiser. I will hide them under the head of my bed.

Dec. 4. I might have known. I had just fallen asleep when Hannah came in to get my boots to black. Of course she couldn't find them, so she shook me and I heard, "For pity's sake, Maggie Ware, what have you done with your boots?" I don't know as ever in my life I was so tempted to —equivocate, I guess, is the best word for it. I don't think I will ever try to conceal a thing as long as I live again. I half told a lie, and then out came the whole truth; and instead of scolding me, what does Hannah do but just stand there and laugh as if it was a good joke. Through the door I heard her telling it over to my mother; and Greta laughed until she coughed. I am glad some one had fun out of it. I couldn't see much, yet I did shake a little, way down under the blankets, where no one would hear me. This morning, mother said, "I hope your boots are not stiff, Maggie," and I meekly answered, "No, thank you."

Dec. 5. This noon, at 12, we go to Washington, where we are to stay and see a little of the city. I hope it will be very little, for I have been there and know it like a book. Herbert gave me a pocket full of candy. He said he promised his mother he would be satisfied with some from a very noted Philadelphia maker. I don't know how much he bought, and I must say I think it would be more sensible for a boy as big as he is, to spend his money for books, but the caramels are very nice, — I never ate better, — and he must be generous, which is pleasant, for if there is one thing I hate more than another, it is your stingy, selfish boy; he 's worse than a girl, any day. Greta loves candy, and it 's good for her, when she coughs. Perhaps Phil will buy some for her, but that 's silly. Mother sent me out to do a little shopping, and Phil went with me. He was so tall and silent I sort of felt as if I was walking with a minister, so I was very glad to come home again.

I didn't buy a thing mother wanted, right. Hannah looked cross enough to bite my head off, but mother only said, "I must take more pains with your shopping, Meg, you are better for making a mistake than for anything else." I have no doubt it was all because I was so much afraid of Phil. I should like to call him Mr. Trehorne, but it was settled as soon as we met that we should call each other by our first names. Our mothers said they were sisters in everything but blood, and therefore we were cousins, only by some distant removes — *very* distant, I should say.

Dec. 6. — If my father expects me to write in my journal every day, he is just mistaken. I am tired when I have ridden over a long distance in the cars; beside, these boys are always round. We have a parlor together, and how polite it would be in me to sit down with my pen and ink, while they sat looking at me. I am sure father would say I ought to do what I can toward entertaining them; beside, my mother told me, you know, I was to make Stanhope happy. He is a dear little fellow, and I never am sorry to amuse him. Hannah says, "Hump!" — that's an ugly monosyllable as she uses it — "you amuse yourself as well; no use taking too much credit for one's own pleasuring!" Mother calls that going to the root of the matter; I call it being decidedly unpleasant. I almost forgot to say that we are in Washington, the capital of this great nation, and the boys are in ecstasies over it. Phil hasn't been seen since breakfast. I think it would have been more polite if he had asked us to go out with him; but his mother said, by way of apology, that "he thought he would go first alone, and learn his way," as if every one didn't know the way. "The wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein."

Afternoon. — We have all been to the Capitol, the White House, the Treasury, and should have gone out to Arlington Heights, but the invalids in the party were tired. Greta went only to the Capitol, but Stanhope would go to the White House; and when there, he seemed so tired Phil took him up in his arms and carried him all over the house. For such a solemn old mouse as Phil, I must say he is very kind, particularly to this little sick brother, and the child seems to dote so on him. There was the room in which Henry Wilson died. A grave-looking waiter asked us if we wouldn't like to see it? I hoped mamma would say "no," for I don't like anything about dead people, but she did say "yes," and off we all posted. Such a beautiful room. I went close up to my mother and Mrs. Trehorne while they were talking about it, and they said they did not see how a great and good man could have had a better room to die in; then, in the Capitol, was so grand for a vice-president. They kept saying how home-like it all was, — the green carpet; the green window-hangings; the green furniture; and the long table standing right in the middle of the room, with all his books on, as he left it. There were some religious books which, mother said, must have been a great comfort to him, dying there all alone, and so suddenly in the end. What looked the most pleasantly to me was the open fireplaces, with the big wood fires everywhere, and some pictures. Herbert and I went out of this room as soon as we could, and Herbert found an old woman with peanuts for sale. Of course, he bought his pockets-full. I never saw such pockets as this boy has — candy and nuts seem to grow in them; but, after all, it is very nice to have some one to go about with who is young and strong. If Herbert was only a girl, how splendid it would be, for he is just nine months and four days older than I am; but a boy I abominate!

Night, just before going to bed. — If my father ever reads this journal, I am afraid he will say he should like less of peanuts and candy, and more of what I saw, so I am going to try and write now, in this still time I have before I go to bed, something instructive. The Capitol is a fine, large, white marble building, surrounded by elegant grounds, with long flights of white-marble steps leading up to it, and surmounted by an elegant dome; altogether it is a very elegant structure, one of which this great, rich nation need not to be ashamed. I don't know but what I should have felt as I do, or rather as I know I ought to, when I am going into a church, but Herbert never can be sober about anything; some time I am going to ask mother to feel and see if his head has any bump of reverence on it; I don't believe it has. He saw every thing that was funny all the way up, and was much more amused tossing peanuts at a crowd of little black boys, and seeing the scramble for them, than he would have been in seeing the President, with his whole Cabinet, go marching by. There, I am writing about Herbert and peanuts again, without sticking to my subject. Greta says it is such a fault of mine never to stick to anything. Well, I was writing about the Capitol. There was a rotunda full of big pictures and statues. I like the statues the best, though Mrs. Trehorne, who has been in Italy, said she "did not think they did much credit to our nation." I don't see why not. I thought they were very fine; but then, I have never been in Italy. We went up into the dome — by *we*, I mean Phil, Herbert, and myself. "You boys," Mrs. Trehorne said, "had better go," waving her hand toward me. For a moment I didn't know what she meant, but Greta laughed and said, "Yes, she is as much of a boy as any of them, only she is so large now she is getting to be ashamed of it." That's what I should call telling stories out of school; but no one can feel vexed at Greta, no matter what she says and does; she's as sweet as an angel, — only I don't know much about angels, and I don't see why people always keep comparing whatever is very beautiful and good to them; they don't know anything more than I do, for for who, since old Bible times, ever saw one?

We went up into the dome, and oh! oh! oh! what a view we had. The best thing about it, though, was the way we came down the stairs. Wasn't it in 2:40 style! Mother said, "Hush, hush!" but if she is going to hush every noise, now Herbert is round, wont she have her hands full? There was no end to the rooms, furnished, I have no doubt, a great deal handsomer than any of the rooms in Queen Victoria's palace. There was an east room and a west room, a green room and a red room, the Senate Chamber and the House of Representatives, and ever so many others beside, but I think this will do for an instructive page; if I write many more about Washington, I shall have no room left for Florida.

Dec. 8.—We have seen everything here, and to-morrow morning we are to start on our journey again, not to stop until we reach Charleston. Think of that, will you; going away from all this cold and ice to a place where it is perpetual summer. I am in such a hurry I should like to have gone on in the night train, but mother says there is no need of over-taxing the strength of the sick ones. Phil edges his way a little more to the places where Greta is sitting, and speaks to her now and then, but she don't seem to care any more for him than she does for Herbert, which is very mean in her, for Herbert never would do, never, and Phil would be so nice.

I never think to write how Greta is, and I suppose it's because she never talks about how she feels; neither does mother, but I heard her telling Mrs. Trehorne that Greta was rather better than worse, and was very happy. Of course she is happy; how can any one help being so, when she is having such a splendid time? I suppose it sounds very girlish to be writing *splendid* so often, but it is, and so why not tell the truth. We are packed to go, — Herbert, with the inevitable candy. He says he means to be President of the United States, and live here in this magnificent White House; but think how shocking it would be to have a President without any teeth in his head, and I am sure by the time he is forty he wont have one left, if candy can spoil them.

CHAPTER IV.

DISTRESSED BY POLITICS.

JUST a word to say. We are off in the noon train, and are to stop in Richmond. Herbert has been round the room shouting "on to Richmond," all day.

Dec. 10.—We meant to do so many things here: go to Libby Prison, and hunt up all the places which were of interest "in the late unhappy war"—that's the way mother always speaks of it, as "the late unhappy war;" and it is no wonder she does, for Uncle Tom and Uncle Stanhope were both killed in it. Mrs. Trehorne named her Stannie after this brave, great man; and perhaps that is the reason he has a weak spine; my uncle was shot in his heart, and that, as I studied in my physiology, lies somewhere near the spine—I don't exactly know where; but it don't matter. I began to say we were to go and see them all, but it rains, and Greta is coughing, and I am not to go out for fear I should take cold. The boys all went, and Herbert came back to say how sorry he was I couldn't go too. I wish I was a boy; they manage to have all the fun. Stannie, of course, stayed at home, so he and I played backgammon, and he beat every time. I was almost glad of it, for he is sick, you know, and it seemed to please him to beat a girl as old as I am.

After dinner. — The boys have been telling us what they saw. I feel like crying my eyes out to think I must be shut up only for a few rain-drops. I am neither sugar nor salt, and shouldn't have melted, but mother is ever so much more careful of me, now Greta is sick. I don't see why; I am as strong as a horse, though that doesn't sound very refined. We are promised a longer stay here the next time we pass through; but I don't like future promises, I had far rather have present realities. We are to go to bed early to-night, and to-morrow we leave for Charleston. I should like to put down here a few of my patriotic feelings upon being in a place so noted in our civil war as Richmond, but when I ventured even a little observation of the kind this morning, I saw Greta look at mother and smile. I can't imagine why. I guess I know I am an American, and a Massachusetts girl, as well as I should if I were a boy.

Dec. 11.—Here we are in Charleston, and it is "awfully jolly." (I put quotation marks before these two last words. Herbert used them. I hope they will be observed by any other eyes than mine that peruse these pages.) We are at the Charleston Hotel, and have such high, large rooms. In the parlor there is a fine picture, almost covering one side of the wall. Mrs. Trehorne said the room reminded her of an English hotel; but the best thing here is a lovely little court-yard, in which, at this very moment while I write, roses are actually in blossom! Will you think of that, out-of-doors, under the blue sky of heaven—and such roses! This court-yard is just one of those little squares, surrounded by the high walls of the hotel, which at the North we should fill with waste tubs, I think; but here is this lovely garden laid out in such exquisite taste. We children have spent an hour in it, and Greta has a chair moved out, that she may not lose a breath of this pure air. Stannie has a little air-cushion he brought with him, at her feet, and they do look so prettily sitting there together. At twelve we are to go out and see Charleston. Mother and Mrs. Trehorne, Greta, and Stannie, in a carriage, and I have my choice to be with them, or to walk with the boys. I don't know which to do. Mother shall decide for me.

After dinner, and a very nice dinner we had, with rice cooked half a dozen ways, and ever so many negroes to wait on us. Herbert, every time their backs were turned, rolled up his eyes at me, and pointed with his thumb at them. His mother caught him with his lips rounded out in a little pucker. I suppose he was trying to imitate their thick ones, and she said, "My son," just as mother says, "Margaret," when she is horrified over something I have done; but I could not help laughing, he looked so droll. He asked a boy waiter to bring him a slice of stewed alligator, at which the boy grinned, said, "Yas, sar," and came back in a moment with an odd-looking something on his plate.

"Eat that, now you have sent for it," said his mother, trying not to smile; so down it went, though Herbert told me afterwards he believed it was liver, and if there was one thing in the world he hated more than another, it was that. Served him right!

I must decide at once with which party to go. Of course, I prefer the carriage party; but, after all, may it not be a little kinder, and more polite, to go with the boys?

Such a splendid time as we have had! I went with the boys, for they seemed to want me, or rather Herbert did. Phil was stiff. I looked to see if he hadn't his sermon-cover under his arm. I never shall get over the feeling that he is a minister. I don't know that I have said his father is a physician in New York city, and this boy would have entered college this fall, if it had not seemed necessary for Stannie to go to Florida. He comes to take charge of the whole party, and he seems to include us, for he sees to everything. We went first to see the remains of the old houses that were shattered by our troops at the time Charleston was bombarded. Such a number and such a desolation. Sometimes there were big holes in the roofs, where the cannon balls had come tearing through; sometimes they went into the sides of the house, making holes that have never been stopped up; and here and there we saw doors and windows toppled down, as if there had been an earthquake.

"It's an awful, old, tumbled-up place," said Herbert, "and I, for one, am glad of it. If it hadn't been for that famous shot from Fort Sumter"—

"Sar!" said a voice close behind Herbert, and he jumped as if he had just felt the shot, "wouldn't you like to buy some ground-nuts, sar? Nice and fresh, sar; just roasted."

"Ye—es," said Herbert, fumbling for a bit of change, with a most relieved look, "I'll take a quart. I thought," he whispered to me as the boy was measuring out the nuts, "it was a policeman going to nab me for treason."

"Better remember what your mother said," I answered gravely. I have to remind him of the proprieties a little oftener than I wish I did; he is a very thoughtless boy. Phil inquired the way to the Battery, and the boy said he would be our guide for a small fee.

On our way, he took us to what he called "dat dere ruin," and ruin it surely was. Never, *never* did I see anything half so beautiful. It was the ivy overgrown walls of what once had been a church—a circular church. There were the windows broken in at the top, no two of them in the same way, and ivy trailing down over where the glass had been, "in a very curious and fantastic way," Phil says; and he says, too, that he never saw anything more beautiful abroad—he went with his mother two years ago. I had read about Melrose Abbey, and I told him "by the pale moonlight" I thought that must be far finer.

"No, no," he said; "the fire stopped here almost as if it were an artist, and were finishing off the old church to be 'a thing of beauty, and a joy forever.'" I only wish Greta could have heard him talk; I am sure she would have fallen in love with him at once; it was like reading a bit of poetry out of the corner of a newspaper, to listen to him.

The Battery is a long, high sea-wall, extending around a part of the city of Charleston. There is a street with some nice houses, very different, to be sure, from what we would call nice in Boston or New York, "but they had a look of their own," Phil said, which was far better. Some of them had nice gardens, with rows of flowers, and statues and vases, and there were orange trees, but none of them with oranges on them, and lemon trees. Herbert was much amused by a scragly sort of a thing that wasn't a tree, and wasn't a bush, and when he asked our guide (he said his name was Scip) what they were, he told us figs; but not a fig was there on one of them, and I only half believed him. There was one of the prettiest little parks all along the side of the Battery, with trees and walks and seats, and ever so many little negro babies toddling about. I want to write down how a negro baby looks to me; but I suppose it will be more correct, as far as proper journal writing is concerned, for me to tell about this Battery. It is a broad esplanade — I should think ten feet broad, perhaps it's twenty, I don't know — of solid stone; on one side of it a perpendicular wall runs sheer down into the water. Little boats were tied to stout iron rings that were driven into the stone, and vessels of every shape and size were riding at anchor in the harbor. Some big steamers were ocean steamers, Phil said, and great, black, ugly-looking things they were. I thought how awful it would be to be on board one in a storm, and to be wrecked; but when I said so to Herbert, he only laughed, and said he didn't think it would be very bad if there was an island near like the Robinson Crusoe island, where we could all go and live. But I do; I prefer to go to Florida.

On the other side of the Battery was the street, and on the other side of the street the fine houses I have been telling you about. When we were walking on this Battery, watching the waves that came rolling in and breaking up against the wall, seeing the white-caps and the fishes as they sprang up, and the negro boatmen out in such odd little boats, and the ferries, and — oh, ever so many other things, I heard, "There they are!" The first thought I had was that some one had heard what Herbert said about that first gun from Sumter, and the Governor of South Carolina had sent to arrest us; but in another moment I knew nobody but Stannie could laugh just such a laugh, and, dear me, what a relief it was!

Sure enough, there was the carriage with all of our mothers and sisters. They had driven to ever so many more places than we had gone to, but why shouldn't they? They got out of their carriage, and we went together to see whether we could get a view of Forts Sumter and Moultrie. They were too distant for us to know much about them, but we had a general idea that there were two long, low things, that looked like piles of stone coming up out of the water. Mother said what she thought about them, and didn't seem to mind the negro man who was driving them, but I felt so frightened for fear he would tell what she said, that I had no comfort until we came home. I am afraid to write any more here, for fear some one will get a peep inside of my journal and betray me. I wish we were away from Charleston; I shall never have a moment's comfort while we are here.

P. S. — I have looked out *esplanade*, and find it means "an open space, a plot of grass." Queer that I never can use a big word, and I am so fond of them, but I put it in wrong somehow. If my father laughs at it when he reads it, will he please to consider this as an apology?

Hannah is in as great a hurry to get away from here as I am. I hope we shall leave to-morrow, and mean to go and tease mother.

Evening. — It is decided that we go at eight to-morrow, and if ever there was a happy creature to leave a place I am the one. South Carolina I have always heard called a —— but I don't dare to write the word, so I will add, a Palmetto State, and long may it remain one; though all I know about palmetto is that I have seen some straw hats in the shop windows, with the word "Palmetto" printed on them. It is some kind of straw that grows, I suppose.

Scip came to our room to-night, with a basket of pop-corn balls to sell. Herbert was not there, or we should have had all Scip brought, and I was ashamed to buy one, though I have spent only fifteen cents of my own money yet; I am too big a girl to be guilty of pop-corn balls; still, to my journal, I will confess how dearly I love them. Scip was sadly disappointed.

Dec. 13. — To-day we came from Charleston to Savannah, the most remarkable ride I ever took in my life. The cars were like those we have at the North, which I did not expect to see, and when I said so to Greta, she pointed to a name printed up over the door, "NEWARK, N. J." "Why shouldn't they be?" she said; "you see they were made there."

"Don't they make anything South?" I asked.

"Yes, cotton, and rice, and sugar cane, and alligators, and palmetto, and — and negroes," said Herbert laughing. "You wait until you get to St. Augustine."

"Everything waits for St. Augustine," I said. "What a wonderful land it must be."

"What's that — that swinging off from those trees?" called out Stanhope.

"That must be the moss," said Mrs. Trehorne. Yes, it is the moss that we see for sale at the corners of the streets in New York. What a different looking thing it is here. Now, I wish I could describe this country, through which our cars were passing, to you, but I don't know where to begin. My father says I shall learn how, by and by, and he always knows. I want to tell you, as Greta would, how queer everything looked that we saw. I know she has been writing a letter to father, and I dare say, if I go and ask her, she will let me copy a little bit in here. Yes, she says I may, and here it is; perhaps when I am as old I can write as well, but I don't know; Greta is a great deal more talented than I am, and has four eyes instead of two. Here is where she begins.

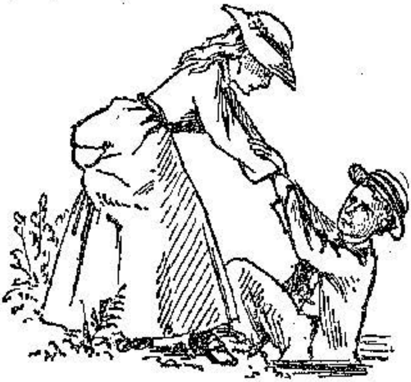
CHAPTER V.

RAILROAD INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS.

RUSHING in the cars through the Northern States, and riding along at your leisure through the Southern ones, is a very different mode of transit. When you leave Charleston, South Carolina, you find the long reaches of barren pine lands a wonder of dullness, as well as a marvel of beauty. To go mile after mile, with the great brown trunks, the far-spreading scrawny arms, and the fine glistening needle leaves above and around you; to look through long vistas of these woods and see rabbits and squirrels, with now and then the suspicion of a deer darting frightened away; never to see a house, or, if you see one, to find it unfenced, unpainted, and unfinished; never to meet a human being, or, if you do, to see a black, shining face, with a body covered by rags,—this is what it means to come from Charleston to Savannah."

Now, isn't that beautiful! I never should have thought to write about marvel of beauty and glistening needle leaves, and they read just like a piece in a newspaper. I know what I can write about, though. When we were all admiring the moss so much, my mother asked if it were not a parasite. Of course I didn't know what a parasite meant, but I have looked it out since, and it means "a hanger on; a plant or animal living upon another." That's to be very mean, and I haven't liked the moss half so well since. A gentleman, who was sitting near us, and who seems to know everything, said yes, it was a parasite, and after a certain length of time every tree it fastened itself upon, died. It grows so fast that it sucks away all the nourishment that properly ought to feed the branches and the leaves of the trees; but I don't see how it can kill such great things as these live oaks. Now I am going to write down something Herbert and I did, but I promised him I wouldn't tell a living soul. It isn't telling any one to write it down here.

There was a tree as big as the old oak used to be on Boston Common. I said it would measure twenty feet round. Herbert said it would measure forty. He has a long measure which he carries in his satchel, "to measure out the land on his orange plantation," he says, and the first time we stopped for refreshment, he and I slipped out of the car to run to the tree. Fortunately the depot happened to be close by the tree, just as it happens in story books, you know, and what do you think; it was growing right out of the water, and we neither of us saw the water until Herbert was in nearly up to his chin.



If I hadn't taken hold of him and pulled with all my might, he would have been drowned. I wrote, up to his chin; no, it was up to his jacket, but he kept going down so fast, he would have been over his head in a few minutes, so I suppose for the rest of the winter he will be obliged to consider me as the saviour of his life! I hope he will be grateful; but I don't believe he will be a bit, for when he climbed back, floundering on to the rails like a drowned whale, all he said was, as sober as a deacon, "There, I told you it was thirty feet. "I don't see how he could have jested on such a solemn occasion; but there he stood, shaking himself like a big Newfoundland dog, and then he said, "If you could contrive to get me my overcoat, without any questions being asked, I should be all right." I went in and stole it; no one saw me, and I never thought perhaps I lent my hand to a deception, until I came to write about it here. I don't wonder now that diaries are so full of repentance; it makes an act look so differently when you come to put it down in black and white.

Anybody but a boy would have taken cold, but not a particle did Herbert. I kept expecting to hear him sneeze, and slid along some aconite pellets out of mother's medicine case to him several times. He said I was very generous, and he hated to rob me, but I knew he was only laughing at me, the pellets were such *small candy;* still, I have no doubt they entirely broke up the cold which he would otherwise have taken. When we came back into the cars, Hannah was getting our lunch ready, — it was worth bringing her for, to have such lunches. The food at the restaurants where we stop is so poor, very few can eat it, so every party comes armed with a huge luncheon basket, and some bring alcohol lamps, with which they make coffee and tea. Father brought us an excellent one, that works to a charm, and Mrs. Trehorne has one too, — only, the first time Herbert used it, he melted off a leg, and now he has to prop it up, and never can find anything to prop it with. I don't suppose it was very proper, but it was so droll everybody laughed. I told him once to light it, and

I would bring him a little stick that would just fit in a moment, so he lit it, and got down on his knees to support it until I came. Well, I looked and I looked — I did really — for the stick, and not one could I find, so there he sat, red-faced and provoked, while I was hunting. When I came back without one, I couldn't help laughing, and I told him he made such a good fourth leg, I thought I wouldn't bring another. Wasn't he mad, though. I never dreamed Herbert had such a temper; and the more vexed he was, the more the people in the car laughed. He didn't speak to me for ever so many miles afterward. But I was telling you about the lunches on board the cars. I know it isn't polite to look at people when they are eating, but how you are going to help it, when there is nothing else to see, is more than I can tell. One woman — this woman has a fat boy with her, whom we can't bear — had a basket as big as a clothes basket, and we saw the boy first with a fried sausage in his hand, then with a piece of mince pie, then with a slice of bread and butter an inch thick, then with a pint mug full of boiling coffee, then with a hard-boiled egg, and after that, with an orange and two apples. He ate all the way from Charleston to Savannah — a tremendous dinner a hundred miles long! Herbert said. There was one odd thing about this boy — he took such a fancy to Stanhope! Every five minutes he would come to him with some nice thing; and Stannie is the most delicate of all little creatures about his eating; it don't seem as if he ever ate enough to keep a bird alive; but it was very sweet to see how he managed not to hurt this boy's feelings. He even took a sausage, and tried his best to eat a bit, but when he really couldn't, Herbert and I helped him. I don't suppose it was very lady-like for me to eat a sausage; but then it was nice, and once in a while a girl must do as she has a mind to.

Our pleasant, jolly time was when we were lunching. Mrs. Trehorne's basket was a model one; I felt so proud of it every time it was opened. The food wasn't hustled in pell-mell, as it was in almost every other one, but each kind was put up so nicely by itself in a paper box; then, when the box was emptied, it was thrown out of the car window. After the first few meals Hannah took charge of their basket too, and we had all kinds of things you can imagine; I mean, we had sort of pic-nic lunches all the time, and we used to dote upon them. To be sure, we made a sort of scramble for the wish-bones, and my wish always was — first, that papa was with us; and second, that Greta would get well and marry Phil! Greta is of a sober cast of mind, and if Phil chooses to study theology, as from his looks I have no doubt he will, she will make an excellent minister's wife. Herbert wishes for so many fishes, when he goes out boating in St. Augustine, that he can't haul them in; or for so many birds that he can't shoot them all; or so many deer that he can run a special train to carry home the antlers of those he kills. I don't see why boys always want to be killing something; one would think, to hear them talk, that the destruction of innocent life was the only sport in the world. Oh, I almost forgot to write about the dismal swamps over which we passed to-day in the cars. I will see if Greta hasn't something about them in her letter. It all seemed dismal swamp to me! Yes; here it is; she was so much interested, I thought father would have to hear of it. Nothing interests her that father is not told of. "Such a picture of desolation as I found when I stepped upon the platform of the car to get a full view of the Dismal Swamp. The water stood in pools all around us [it was into one of those pools that Herbert fell], long dank grass and long dank water-reeds coming up out of it everywhere. At a distance we could see thick jungles that looked almost impenetrable. It was in these that the hunted fugitives had taken refuge. Poor things! As I stood there, out from between the bright, green, translucent leaves, sharp dark faces seemed to look at me, faces pinched with hunger, and pale with mortal terror; while stealing, gliding, crouching on all fours, I fancied I could see the fierce, silent blood-hounds. I must have carried a pale face back from this fancied picture into the cars, for as soon as she saw me, mother said, 'Why, Greta, what has happened to you; are you feeling sick?'"

She was as pale as a ghost, and all the rest of the afternoon I kept watch of her, giving her as much room on the seat as I could make for her, and not letting a bit of the luggage press against her, when I could help it. I hate that old Dismal Swamp, and never want to see it again as long as I live, now I know how badly it made Greta feel. I am glad we are in Savannah. We are to stay over to-morrow, so we can run about and see it all.

Dec. 15.—I don't hesitate to affirm that Savannah is the most beautiful city in the Union. Mother would say: "Maggie, have you seen enough of them to know?" but I should answer: "I know that this one is perfectly beautiful; and if anything can beat that—*perfectly* beautiful,—then I will give up, but not without."

After breakfast the carriage party went out, and I had an invitation to go with them, but I like my feet better; and for boys, these Trehornes are not bad company; beside, I feel as if it was more polite in me to go. Well, we had no idea what was before us. We stumbled, the very first thing, into such a lovely park. There were broad, nice walks, under great, magnificent trees, with flowers everywhere—real flower-beds,—and fountains, and statues, and ivy, and seats to sit down and rest on, and policemen, and no end to what there was to be seen! Will you imagine, if you can, among your snows and your freezes at the north, a place where roses, and verbenas, and gilly flowers, and myrtles, and pinks are all in blossom out of doors; where you sit down in bright sunshine, hear birds sing, and even see butterflies flitting about?

Never — never — never can there be a place more like Eden than this city of Savannah! only, perhaps, in Eden they didn't have quite such deep sand in the middle of the streets — you never saw anything like it! Herbert said the horses went in up to their knees; but I don't think it was quite as bad as that, for I could see the axle of the wheels.

"What's that?" Herbert asked, stopping us suddenly by a house we were passing.

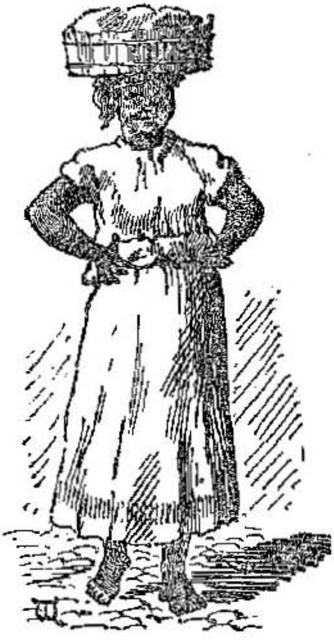
We looked, and sure enough there was a tree with oranges on it! We crossed over the street, and stood looking through the pales of the garden fence in which it grew, with all our eyes. The tree was about as large as a moderate-sized pear tree, with the smoothest and most glossy of leaves. We counted twenty-five oranges, and Phil said he shouldn't be surprised if there were as many as fifty on the tree. Only think of fifty ripe oranges on one tree! While we were standing there looking through, an orange dropped to the ground.

"You just wait," said Herbert, going to the gate;

"that fell on purpose for us, I know." I was so scared, I begged and prayed him not to go, though I wanted the orange dreadfully. Think of stealing the first orange we saw at the South, how it would sound! but Herbert wouldn't mind what I said, in the least. He had the gate half open, when Phil, who hadn't troubled himself to speak before, but had grinned, said: "Don't bother her, Herbert!" as if it was only bothering me, not the theft that was of consequence! I take back all I have said about Philip Trehorne making a good minister, if he is not more shocked at stealing. I don't see how he could consistently ever enter the pulpit.

Wasn't I glad to get away! I never shall feel safe to go out with these boys again, if they can't draw nicer moral distinctions. If you think that last sentence is too old for a girl of fourteen, I beg to inform you that I fully understand the sentiment my pen has expressed, and feel that I am rapidly fulfilling my father's expectations, that I should soon learn to write easily.

We heard an old negro woman calling something in the street as we went home. She had a big tub on her head, and balanced it perfectly. She put her two hands on her hips, and swung from side to side, as easily as I have seen skaters balance themselves on the ice. We all tried to understand what she called. Phil said it was "Owls! owls!" Herbert said no, it was "Omlet! omlet!" and I said it was "Lobsters! lobsters!" So we walked slowly down to meet her, and Phil asked her what she said. She wasn't cross, as so many market-women at the North would have been, but she slipped her tub off her head, and let us look inside — there were plenty of oysters! She said she asked twenty-five cents a quart when she could get it, and twenty when she couldn't; that she sold a great many every day, and made a good living out of them. Phil has a very pleasant way of talking to people, and he always receives a pleasant answer. Mother says that is the way in the world — we almost always get just what we give. This old negress bowed and smiled, and was as polite as "a basket of chips," Herbert says, — but that sounds to me a little slangy, and I have promised not to write a slang word here if I could help it; *I* didn't say that, so I suppose it is all right.



We were very much interested in the negroes, of whom the streets are full. "They look like black sunshine," Herbert says, and that is very good.

Wednesday morning. — They will tell you freely here, with a laugh, how they "skedaddled" from Savannah when the Union troops — "the Yankees" they call them — bombarded the city. "Not much to take!" one of the merchants down on a wharf told Phil; but that is all I dare to write about it, for if this should be taken possession of by some one, authorities, you know — the governor of Georgia, or some of his council — we might be arrested. I suppose there have been deeds of darkness done before this at the South; but everybody is polite — more than that, very cordial — to us, not a bit stiff, or as if they lived in a con— I didn't write the word — city. The day is delightful. How I wish I could send a whiff of this salubrious air to my father. We leave at four this afternoon for Jacksonville, which, there is no need of my writing, is in Florida. I hope we shall have a safe journey.

Dec. 18. — It almost seems as if that last line in my journal was prophetic; it might literally have been my last, for in the middle of the night we came upon a broken rail, and, of course, we had an accident. I wonder how it will read when it is reported in the papers. This is the way it really happened:

We all had berths in the Pullman palace sleeping-car, and I dare say the car was made at Newark, for it seemed precisely like those we have north. Oh, such a crowded car, and so many sick people. It is very distressing to see how invalids, sick with all kinds of diseases, flock to the South; but most of them cough — Greta's cough is nothing in comparison with the others. Mother is always doing something for some of them, and so is Mrs. Trehorne. One would think, to see how many little delicacies and relishing things they produce, that they had packed their lunch-basket with special reference to the sick, and the children. There was a young mother — but I forgot I was going to write about our railroad disaster. We had our berths near together, and all went to bed early — everybody goes early on board the train; after dark you can't see out, you know, and the next best thing to do is to sleep. I don't mind the snoring now as much as I did, I am used to it; beside, it is a very bad habit Hannah has taken up, I am sorry to say, and she makes so much noise, she drowns the rest. I suppose every one had been asleep — I know I had — when suddenly there we were, sprawling on the floor together, all in a heap; somebody's foot was in my face, and my feet and arms were in somebody's else face, and — oh, it was dreadful! When I opened my eyes, it was dark and still, but in an instant one began to groan, then another, and another, until the car seemed full of groans, and then I heard Hannah say right out, clear and sharp, as she always speaks:

"Pity's sake! what's up now?" "I should think it was what's down now?" said a man's voice from the other end of the car. "Anybody hurt?"

"I'm not," answered another man's voice with a cheery sound; "but we are on our beams end, I suppose, by the way things look. Who's hurt?"

Several heavy groans in reply, and then one feeble voice said, "I'm killed!"

"Oh no, my friend," answered the same voice; "keep still where you are, until I take the bearings. I am as sound as a nut, and will have a light here in a minute. If I step on any one, let me know."

A shout was his immediate answer, and a pluff. "Look out, my friend; I'm wedged in here somehow, but I'm not dead; just step easy until you get your foot off my arm, will you!"

"Easy!" said the man, apparently lifting his foot cautiously; "the only trouble is to know where to put it down without crushing some one else. Anybody got a match? You're not dead, I hear." "No sir; no, sir, I am happy to say. No, sir; nor hurt, only wedged in; my berth holds me tight. There's matches in one of my pockets, but where the pocket is, is more than I can tell."

While these people were talking, the rest of us were trying to find out whether we were dead or alive, and, if alive, where we were. The feet in my face, after one or two vigorous kicks, were pulled away. I never knew, to this minute, whose they were, and I gathered my own back, and tucked them under me, to keep them safe, until I could tell what had happened.

"Mother — mother — mother!" I kept calling. It seems to me I said so a hundred times before she answered.

"Maggie, keep still. Are you hurt?"

"No; only I've lost my arms and legs, and don't know where to find them!"

"Keep still, then, until I come to you."

So I kept very still, and pretty soon I heard her voice again — "Maggie, where are you?"

"Here, mother. Where's Greta?"

"I don't know. Greta! Greta!"

No answer; and Hannah, from somewhere near me, said:

"The Lord have mercy! the dear child has been killed!"

I don't know what happened next. I tried my best to find my feet, and go to Greta, but the car was so slanting there was no standing, and I just tumbled on to somebody, who groaned awfully, and frightened me so that I just screamed, and then somebody else screamed, and pretty soon it seemed to me everybody in the car was screaming, and I the loudest of them all. Then some one shook me, and told me to "stop this instant!" I knew at once it was Hannah. I should know her shake if I was dying, I believe; and I did stop, at least tried to. Just then the door was opened, and the conductor's lantern was swung inside. Oh, what a sight it was! Never, to my dying day, shall I forget it.

We were all huddled up in a heap on one side of the car, for it upset, and nothing else. There was a broken rail, and we had gone almost over on one side, so as to throw the people out of one side of the berths, then had righted, and gone over on the other for good, though I think, if I should write for bad, it would be more appropriate. You see, I am writing this when I know that no one was seriously hurt, only banged a good deal. Greta is all right to-day, and is sending a letter to father about it this minute. We telegraphed to him at once that we were all safe, as soon as we reached Jacksonville, so he will know we were not hurt, long before he knew that there was anything to hurt us.

As I was writing, the conductor's lantern swung in among us did show such queer sights, such a mixing up together, as never was before seen in the world, I am sure.

The first thing I saw was Greta with her head on Philip's shoulder. How it came there, no one knows; but there she sat, and he had his arm around her, holding her up, without the least idea who it was. Of course, that spoiled all the romance. She had fallen out of the upper berth, and struck her head on something hard, which had stunned her. Phil had been thrown just where her head could drop on his shoulder! Now, if that incident had been put into a story-book, how improbable we should say it was. Mother was wedged in between some carpet-bags, and people. None of us knew how anything was, only something, or somebody, held her dress so tightly, she couldn't move; but the dear, darling, blessed mother hadn't a scratch or a bruise of any kind on her! Hannah was sprawling about, with her arms free, but her feet held fast; her arms were just where they could reach me, and — shake me, of course. I bear her a grudge for that shaking. I don't think I deserved it in the least. I couldn't help screaming. How could I, pray?

Mrs. Trehorne was pitched off into a corner, and hurt her shoulder; but she makes light of it, and says, "As Stannie escaped without the least injury, she should think herself the most ungrateful of human beings if she minded a simple bruise." Herbert was hurt on his right hip, so he "dots and goes one," he says; but he is a boy, and if a boy can't bear a hurt without making a fuss, it's a pity. Phil had his wrist sprained, and I dare say it was done in his anxiety to succor Greta; but when I said so, he smiled, and answered:

"I wish it had been; but, unfortunately, it is the other arm — it was twisted as I fell."

Hannah is hurt, but won't tell any one where. I think it must be pretty bad, for she is cross every time a word is said to her about it.

"If you won't, none on ye, make a fuss over me," she said gruffly, when we were asking her about it, "I'll promise you I won't, so that's even."

I suppose Hannah means it all for the best; but she is never so ill-mannered as she is when she is positively suffering. I don't think she is one of the kind that are made perfect through suffering, and I wish we knew where she was hurt.

Well, to go back to the conductor and his lantern once more. Such a scrambling up and out of the car as there was, as soon as we found our whereabouts, never was seen before. It was about three in the morning, and real cold, so we were huddled into the cars that were standing upright, and our clothes were brought in from out of the ruins as fast as they could be picked up. I can tell you, it *was* a time; but mother said the only surprise was that, after such a mixing up, we were straightened out again.

We were all so happy, when we found there was no serious injury done, that we were almost merry — I say almost, for mother said we ought, none of us, to forget how near we had been to eternity, and what a truly wonderful escape it was!

We hardly minded the hours of detention that followed, and the loss of Mrs. Trehorne's lunch-basket. Ours was all safe. Hannah ties up things so tight, that Herbert used to say, almost every day, as he sat watching her, "That would make the passage of the Red Sea without taking in a drop of water." I don't know why he said "Red Sea," unless he was thinking of the Israelites; but he always does it. Well, we had the good of it now, for everybody in the cars, even the bruised ones, were hungry, and we are so near our journey's end, that we were glad to empty our basket. No more sleep for us after this. We just made ourselves as comfortable as we could, and talked it over all the rest of the time until the day broke, and then we were in Florida.

CHAPTER VI.

WELCOME TO FLORIDA.

I DON'T see as anything looked changed, as I had expected to find it. There were the same trees covered with leaves and moss; the same roads that began nowhere, and I am sure ended nowhere; negro cabins with holes in the roofs, or an old barrel for the smoke to come out of; negro children at the door, — I was going to say in their night clothes, but I don't believe their mothers took the trouble to make them any; yellow dogs — "curs" Herbert calls them — standing with their feet wide apart, ready to bark at the cars as we passed; and not a white man anywhere but at the stations. Such stations! just huts with a door and a platform before it; rolls of old skins, and now and then some game. Phil bought a string of ducks, five, for one dollar, and such beauties as they were! He said he bought them of a smart negro boy who had shot them that very morning. There were wild turkeys, and a string of small birds tied up by their feet, which seemed to belong to the same boy. But Phil didn't even know what to do with these, as we were going to a hotel. He said they were too cheap and tempting to leave, and he would manage them some way. To which remark Hannah said in her way, "Humph!"

It's bad enough to have her say that miserable word to me, but when it comes to a stranger like Philip Trehorne, it is quite unbearable; but Phil doesn't seem to mind it. He likes Hannah; says she is the most original person he ever met in his life. I don't know what he meant by "original," but if it is lovely, I dont agree with him, for obvious reasons.

I suppose it would have been more in order if I had said, to begin with, that here we are safe in Jacksonville, very near the end of our journey, but it isn't every day that I have a railroad accident to write about, and I must be excused this time. We are here, though, and are going to stay several days to have our bruises heal before we go on. No one has a bone broken. Phil's sprained wrist is the worst injury that has come to any of our party, and as far as we can learn nothing more serious happened to any in the cars. This, considering the number of sick people and children, is wonderful indeed,—"a maracle," Hannah calls it.

We don't care, any of us, to go out to see Jacksonville this morning. We have pleasant rooms at the St. James. From my window I can see 'way up the St. John's River. Boats, and sloops, and steamers, and ferries are here in abundance, and so many of the ever-present negroes. There are real orange trees here, and plenty of oranges, we suppose, though Herbert limped out this morning and came in with six, for which he had given twenty-five cents,—almost as much as they cost at the North; but such beauties as they were to look at! and as for the eating! Let no one suppose an orange has been eaten until it is eaten in Florida. I am dying to go into an orange grove, and pick and eat as I want to; but, so far as we can learn, you cannot do that in Jacksonville. You have to go some miles into the country, into a regular orange orchard. That 's what we mean to do.

Jacksonville, from our hotel, looks very much like a Northern town. Everybody here speaks English,—Northern English, I mean, and the house is crowded with Northern people. Numbers came from Boston, so we feel quite at home. We met at breakfast several of those who had come on in the cars with us. The topic of conversation was, of course, our escape last night.

There is one pleasant family with whom we have had a good deal to do; their name is Stratton, and they are from somewhere in New York State. They meant to stop in Jacksonville for the winter, but they say it is altogether too Northern for them, so they also go on to St. Augustine. It is droll that so little is known of St. Augustine. People have the idea that it is a dull, out-of-the-way place, with very little of interest but an old fort and an old cathedral. We shall see. There are two children with this party, but they are so shy there is no getting acquainted with them. Herbert has tried ever so many times, and if any one could do it, I think he could.

There, I hear him talking with the boy, out of my window, this very minute. All the hotels and most of the houses here have piazzas around them (verandahs they call them), and people seem to live out on them. I 'll just put down my pen, — or no, I 'll move my stand by the window, then as they go by, perhaps they will stop and speak.

The boy's name with whom Herbert is talking is Sam, and Sam is so short I like it. Sam Stratton, — S. S. — Sunday School; but he doesn't look much like a Sunday School boy, he is too lazy.

Yes, they did stop for a talk, and I want to re-write what I put down about Sam's being lazy. I should think he was a very fine boy indeed. He told me his party were going out boating in the afternoon, and asked me, a little shyly, to go with them. Of course I declined, for mother does not like to have me accept an invitation without her leave; but if there is one thing more than another that I am very fond of, it is boating, and the boats do look so charming out on the St. John. I wish I could go. He had asked Herbert, too, and Herbert had accepted. I wonder why girls should have to ask their mothers so much more than boys?

Sam hung round where we were sitting when we all went down to the parlor; Herbert was out of doors somewhere; he is always away now, so there was no one for him to speak to, and though I wanted to go and talk with him, I knew Greta would open those big, blue eyes of hers at me, if I tried to, so I pretended I did not see him, but I did. At length mother noticed him, and, in her pretty way, said, "How do you like Jacksonville?" Sam turned as red as if he had been caught telling a lie, and blundered out, "I like the St. John's; we are going boating; may she go too?" pointing with a fat little thumb at me; "he" — pointing with the same thumb over his shoulder, as if he saw somebody behind the door — "wants to have her, and I do, too."

"Who's he?" asked mother, smiling.

"That other boy, Herbert, I heard you call him."

"Is Herbert going?"

"No," said Mrs. Trehorne, shaking her head, "I have heard nothing of it."

"He said he would," went on Sam, shifting from one foot to the other, and looking as if he wanted to run away.

"But he wouldn't go, I hope, without consulting me," went on Herbert's mother.

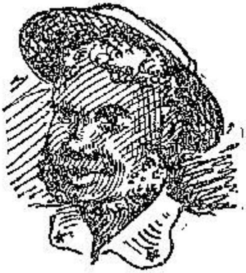
"He said he would," persevered Sam. "Father hired the boat for the winter, and we go every day. I row, too, but father won't let me sail her unless he 's on board."

"I should hope not," said my mother, still with that pretty smile that makes even her no's better than some other people's yes's. "I have heard that the St. John's is a famous river for sudden gusts."

"We 've been here three winters, and boated all the time, and never saw one, any way," went on Sam, venturing a little nearer. "We went up the Ocklawaha once, and were gone two weeks."

"Not in a boat?" asked mother.

"No, in a little sloop; but we had the same boatman; it 's Ben Pride; he 's colored, you know, but he is the best skipper on the St. John's. He 's going out with us this afternoon, that is, father said he should," pointing at me again with that disreputable thumb, "if she would go, too."



"Oh, mother, may I?" I couldn't help asking, for my whole heart came up into my mouth and I did want to go so.

"If you would like to have her, Mary," that 's what Mrs. Trehorne calls my mother (they were school mates, you know), "I will send Phil to make inquiries."

"If it 's all right," said that dear mother of mine, "Maggie wants to go so much." How she always knows everything is a wonder to me; now I had not even whispered to her how much I wanted to go, and, you see, she knew. Then Mrs. Trehorne spoke to Phil a moment in a low voice, and then Phil said, —

"Come, Sam, let us go and see about it."

Sam looked very happy, as if he knew it was all right, as they went out together, and to keep myself quiet I have come into my room, locked my door, and been writing *the above*. That 's what they say in journals. One reason why I locked my door was because I wanted to try on a new dress that I thought would be very suitable for boating, and I was afraid if Greta came in she would laugh at me. I think the dress is handsome, and with the close crimped frill it is not unbecoming. It is always the bows, or the finishings-off that trouble me the worst, but I don't know as it is necessary for me to put all this in my journal.

Evening.—We have been and had a most magnificent time. Yes, I must write *magnificent*, for it is the only word in the English language that will begin to describe it. Phil found it was all right; Mr. and Mrs. Stratton have been here for several years, and are substantial and reliable people, — that is what I heard Phil say the landlord told him, — and the boat was better than right, and Ben Pride is the best boatman on the St. John's. I guess he is; if any one doubts it, I should like to have him go out on the river with Ben to manage, as we did to-day.

We were just to go up the river as far as we wanted to, then to turn round and come back, or we could go on shore and eat a lunch if we pleased. Of course we pleased to have the lunch, and Hannah put up mine in her usual way, which, though Hannah is sometimes cross to me, I must say is never excelled by any one. Well, the boat was large, with the prettiest pattern of oil matting on the bottom, and elegant cushions. It had a large sail, and a railing all round it, and even a bright red mat for the ladies' feet, "to be sure and keep them dry," Sam said, as he put it under mine. It seems so queer to be a young lady and have big boys to wait upon you, for I have no brothers, and, at home, mother does not like to have me go even out to the little parties, so I know no boys but the disagreeable ones I have told you of. As soon as we were all seated, Ben Pride asked if we were ready, and Herbert shouted, "Aye, aye!" just as if he was a sailor. Then off we went. There was just a little breeze, not too much, not too little, but just enough not to frighten you; and there was Martha, Mrs. Stratton's nurse, with the two little girls, Mamie and Bessie; they are real little girls, one is six, the other only eight, and I should have thought their mother would have been afraid to let them go out on the water without her, but she wasn't; she stood on the wharf and saw us off, only saying to the children, "Be good, and do just as Martha tells you." That sounded natural, for I have heard my mother say so a hundred times about Hannah. I was glad when I grew large enough not to hear it any more. Before we were very far from land, we saw a big steamer coming directly down behind us. It looked so large and white, with the big chimney and the smoke pouring out, and the wheel turning round and round as if it would come over and crush us all to atoms, that I began to tremble the moment I saw it. I wanted to ask Ben Pride to get out of its way as fast as he could, but I don't dare to speak to the negroes yet, unless I have to, for, although they always seem pleasant, yet their eyes and their lips are so big, — I don't know, it seems as if they weren't real people at all. Instead of going out of the way of the steamer, Ben Pride said, "Now for a race," and turned his boat directly toward it. I did scream, but it was only a little scream, and I hid the end of it so well in a cough, that I don't think any one found me out, though Martha asked me if I was sick. How absurd to suppose I could be sick on a river, when I have been round Point Judith in a storm! We went up — up — up close to her, until I thought I should have died; and those miserable boys, they seemed to enjoy every minute of it. Herbert was quite wild; as we came so near that we were almost in the long, white wake of the boat, he took off his cap and swung it round as if it were a great time for joy, and Sam shrieked out, "Hurrah! How are you?" Then the people on the boat came rushing over to the side where we were, and called out "Hurrah! Three cheers for the Great Eastern! Where you bound?"

"Round the world," said Herbert, saucily, still waving that old cap.

"Captain Cook on board?"

"Yes, sir-ee," said Herbert again, "and we've captured fourteen whales, been eaten alive by six hundred cannibals, and burned on the pyres of forty husbands in India, beside walking round the city walls of Canton, and camping out for two weeks on the highest point of the Himalaya Mountains."

"That will do for high," came back from the steamer. "I say, young fellow, where do you hail from?"

"Part of us from the Mountains of the Moon, and part from the heart of Africa, the source of the Nile."

Now, long as I had been with Herbert, I never heard him so impudent before, and I do believe I should have laughed at him, but Ben Pride kept putting his boat nearer and nearer the steamer, and I was frightened almost to death. I thought I never should see my mother or Greta again; for Hannah I didn't care so much, though I should have been sorry, because—though she does call out to me so improperly sometimes—I know she loves me, and would be sorry to have me drowned.

"Have a race?" Ben called to a man on board the steamer, a man who seemed to be steering the boat.

"Ben Pride?" asked the man, standing up and looking 'way down into our boat.

"Aye, aye, sar," said Ben, touching his cap.

"I thought so, nobody else would be so impudent. Look out there, old fellow, or I'll run you down."

"Aye, aye!" said Ben again, but instead of turning away, he put the prow of his boat right across, it seemed to me, the way the ship must go. I screamed then; yes, I really did, and I may as well own it. I really *screamed*, and Ben Pride frightened me all the more by rolling those great eyes round on me, and saying, "Skeered, ha! ha! ha! Really skeered now." I want to ask my father when he is reading these pages what he thinks, was it silly in me? Wasn't there reason to suppose that we were really in danger, and not, as Herbert declares, as safe as if we had been on dry land? I heard with my own ears the man say, "Look out, or I will run you down," and I supposed he meant what he said. Herbert made all manner of fun of me after we came home, and though I couldn't help laughing, I don't think it was kind.

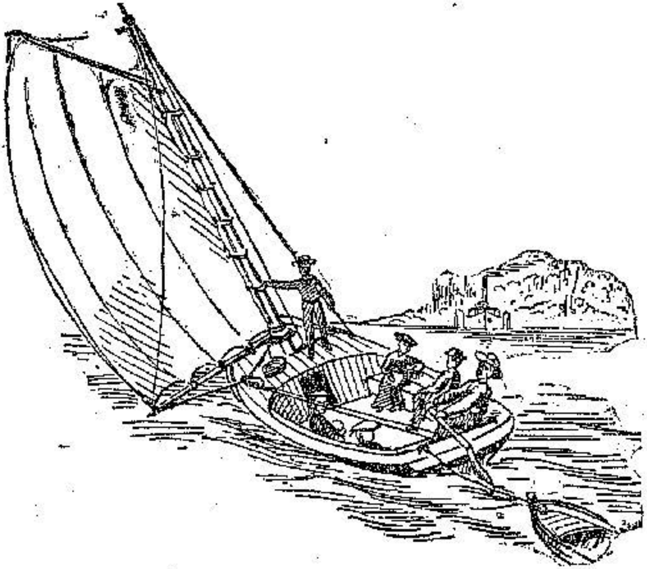
Well, if you can believe it, we did, for quite a little distance, keep up with that big steamer. Ben Pride let out two more sails, and there we were, leaping along under what, I have read somewhere, would be called a press of sail. I had to keep putting down my head when Ben said, "just a leetle," and pulled the ropes; and I held on so tight to the side of the boat, that my fingers have been sore ever since; but I don't dare tell any one. Herbert declares that the faster the boat went, the more I held on, as if I was sure I must hold it — the boat — up, or it would go to the bottom. If ever a being was delighted, I was, when I saw the steamer, in spite of all Ben could do, going before us; at first it was only a little, then a little more, until Ben Pride laughed, and began to pull down one of his sails.

"Give it up," he said, with a broad grin; "can't beat steam but a leetle while, wind or no wind; and we turned round just at the wrong time for the boat."

"Shame on you, Ben Pride!" said Herbert, half vexed.

"Take the tiller, massa, if you can bring her," said Ben, making a place for Herbert close by his side; and that audacious boy really had the face to take the tiller in his hand, and act as if he was going to give the steamer chase again.

I know I turned pale; and if I ever wished devoutly that I had not come out on a boating excursion, or promised myself never to ask for such a favor again, I did while Herbert acted as steersman.



The rest didn't seem to care in the least for any of these things. Martha just sat and laughed, and even six-year-old Bessie appeared to find great fun in it. As for Sam, he kept inciting Ben Pride to all kinds of daring things with his —

"Now, Ben Pride, cut her along!" "I say, Ben Pride, how many snails did you hire to sail us today?" "You, Ben Pride, there's Sambo out with the 'Nancy Ann.' Now you'll see yourself beat, if you don't wake up!" "Put the old craft along. Up now, and on!"

I forgot to say, what I presume Greta would have mentioned to begin with, that our boat is called the "Sea-Gull." Isn't that a very appropriate and pretty name? That's what made Sam and Herbert keep saying, "Let her fly, let her fly, Ben Pride!"

I don't know but we should have been sailing there this very minute, if it hadn't been for those luncheon-baskets, and that boys are always hungry. Herbert is eating almost all the time. Fortunately, as the steamer went further and further up the river — good riddance I said to it very heartily — they began to think about something but a race, and told Ben Pride to run ashore, and let us have our luncheon.

Ben chose the prettiest place, I do believe, on the St. John's River; and as our boat went toward it at a quiet rate, I almost forgave him for the fright he had given me, and enjoyed the sail. It was a little orange grove, — a real, true orange grove, — and such a grove! How can I tell you about it? You remember how much we thought of the one orange tree we saw in Savannah. Well, it was just nothing in comparison with this!

These trees were larger, most of them, than the cherry trees at the North; larger than most of our apple trees, and covered, literally covered, with great, glorious ripe oranges! And then the leaves, so green, so glossy, shining away in the sun-light as if they had been newly varnished — no, varnished is not the word, it sounds like cabinet-making; but I don't know a better.

I was so excited, when I was actually on shore, that I left my lunch-basket; but that wasn't much matter; Herbert always looks out for it.

As we were running toward the grove, I managed to get Herbert alone for a moment, and asked him if he supposed we could pick and eat any of the oranges, when, without the least hesitation, he called to Ben Pride, —

"What about the oranges, Ben Pride? Can a fellow hook one, without stealing?"

"Yes, sar; yes, sar; as many as you want: they are public property." Then Sam and Martha and even Mamie and Bessie laughed; but I couldn't imagine what they were laughing at. I didn't think it was very good manners. I was as happy as a queen to be going into a real orange grove, and to have as many as we wanted. What a fairy land of perfect delight Florida is!

Herbert didn't wait for the rest of us, but ran up to the grove as fast as his feet could carry him; and when we reached there, he had quite a heap of oranges that he had picked up from the ground, all ready for us. How perfectly beautiful they were! and what a sight the trees were! I didn't know which to admire the most.

"How many are there on this tree, should you think?" Herbert asked, throwing himself on his back, and looking wisely up into the tree.

"Oh, two or three thousand," said Ben Pride, carelessly.

"Two or three thousand," repeated Herbert, his eyes very wide open.

"Two or three thousand," I repeated slowly.

"Yas, sar! Yas, missis! Plenty grows here in Florida."

"I should think so," I said, now wholly forgiving Ben Pride for the steamboat race; "and we may eat a few if we wish?"

"As many as you wish ;dem dare for the public."

By this time, Herbert's knife was out and he was punching a big hole in the top of the orange. This was my way of eating them, too, and I thought mother wouldn't mind the boys and the others, so I punched a hole and turned my back to get a good long pull at the juice without being observed. I heard some titters, I knew I did, but I wanted my orange too much to mind them. I gave the orange a hard squeeze, and—well, I will just write down that if that was a nice Florida orange, I thought I had enough of them. My orange was so sour, and so bitter, and I was so utterly surprised, that I made an exclamation. I know I did; and that was followed by a loud laugh from all the others. I turned round to see what had happened, and there was Herbert, red in the face, throwing his pile of oranges out into the river as fast as he could make his hands fly.

So, so, I thought, your orange was as sour as mine, and you're mad at them, are you? But I just stood still and looked at him without saying a word.

"Don't like um, sar?" said that miserable Ben Pride, doubling himself up as if it was his back that laughed, and not his mouth. "Why, sar, dem dare Florida oranges, for sure, sar, help yourself, dey public property, sar, no charge, plenty of them."

"You, Ben Pride," said Herbert, after he had thrown the last one of his heap into the river, "you've got me this time; it's a sell, but if I ever eat a sour Florida orange again and think it is to be sweet, you may look in my eye for something green."

"Yas, sar, I see, bery green," said Ben Pride, grinning impudently. "Make very good orangeade, sar, better than lemon."

"I'll leave it all for you to drink, Ben Pride; from this moment, hereafter and forever, I forswear all sour Florida oranges." But I noticed when Martha made some orangeade, which she did after we had lunched, and handed it to him, he didn't leave a drop in his glass.

Father told me to learn everything useful that I could, and write it down in my journal. "In that way," he said, "you will make up for not being at school." When I saw how nice the orangeade was, and felt the refreshment which stole over me — that's writing like Greta — I took Martha aside and asked her for the receipt for making it. Martha is an Irish girl, but so respectful and pleasant, I wish our Hannah would take pattern by her; but then, Hannah is not a common nurse, as Martha is.

"Indade, miss," she said, smiling as happy as a queen, "it's made just like lemonade, only the peel is so oily we take a great deal of throuble to keep it out clare." So I have learned to-day that the wild orange which grows so abundantly in Florida is public property; that the only way you can tell it from sweet is by a peculiar conformation of the leaves, which I would describe to you, but I am sure I should make some mistake; that the sour orange is sour enough, with a tingling, puckering acid you never want to taste but once, and that the juice makes excellent flavor for pies, first-class lemonade, the nicest marmalade, and a delicious wine! This orange can be budded and made to bear sweet oranges; it is done so, largely, in many parts of Florida, and it is also used as an ornamental tree, the preference for this use being given to it because it is so hardy, and also because there is no temptation to pick and eat the fruit. I should think not, from my experience!

I wish I could write down here what a beautiful tree it is, but you don't want me telling you on every third line of my journal the same thing. All this I asked Martha and Ben Pride. If Ben was a white man I should say I had the most intelligent answers from him, but I don't suppose a negro could in any way be made to know as much as a white person.

We talked about camping out in this orange grove for a week, and went about finding places for everything, tents and kitchen, and we even looked up a well of water, or rather a little stream which was as clear as any Northern one. I don't know that I have said how level the land is in Florida; what they call a hummock here — Ben Pride pointed one out to us a little way back from the river — wouldn't seem to us New Englanders any more than a mole hill; but I could see Ben thought this something great.

We are not going to "rush it;" that is a boy's way of saying "hurry it," and, as it is not slang, I suppose I may be allowed to use it. By we I mean Herbert and I. We decided not to ask at once for our camping out now, but to accept our boating frolic for one week, and to let this other wait for another time.

We stayed a long time on the banks, and when we went on board our boat again, I whispered to Herbert to ask if the steamer was coming back; at which he laughed, as if he thought there was a joke behind it, and said, "No, not for some hours; not until we are sound asleep, at any rate." So I went on board the boat with a much quieter feeling. We came home swiftly, the wind being at our backs. The boat cut through the waves with a little bound which made my heart leap for joy, particularly as the steamer did not come in sight, and I knew every bound brought me nearer my mother. I was almost homesick, we had been gone so long; I should have been quite so if those old, red chimney stacks of the steamer had come in sight.

Hannah was walking down on the wharf, looking for us. Never did I love her half so well as when I saw her with that old-fashioned, brown straw bonnet tied down tight under her chin, and her barege shawl pinned close over her shoulders. I should know Hannah by those two articles of dress if I met her suddenly in Japan. It's the barege shawl in summer, and a brown and white plaid blanket shawl in winter. Well, my heart went out so to this queer little old woman, that the moment Ben Pride ran our boat up to the steps, I scrambled over the first one, threw my arms round her neck, and kissed her half a dozen times. Never did a being look so utterly surprised. She knows I don't like to have her following me about as if I was only a baby, and couldn't take care of myself, so I think she expected to find me what she not very politely calls "huffy." As it was, she only said, —

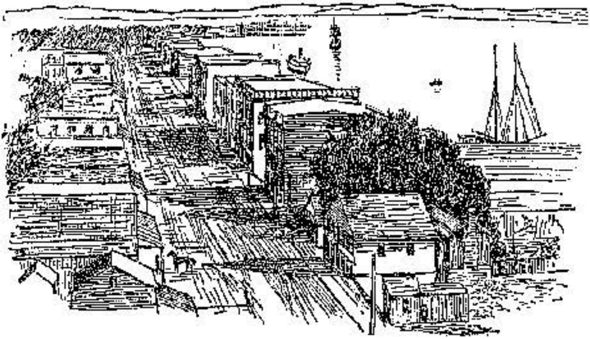
"Well now, what's to pay?"

I couldn't tell her how near I had come to being drowned on board that boat, for Herbert had caught up to us, and was making believe he was going to kiss her too; beside, I thought, just in time, that if my mother should learn of this mortal peril, she would never be willing to trust me with Ben Pride again. Between us both, by the time we reached the hotel, I think Hannah wished she had been less anxious and had stayed at home; she looked "pretty well beat out," to use her own words.

Mother received me with her usual smile, and, as she was writing to father, she only looked up from her paper and asked if I had a good time. Suppose she had known *all*, what would she have said? To my surprise, I found Mrs. Trehorne, Stanhope, Phil, and Greta had gone boating too. "The day was so tempting," mother said, and "she wished to have Greta out all she could be." I wished I had come home earlier so I could have joined them, but I don't know as it would have been best; it would have left Herbert at home alone, and that would not have been kind; so, instead, I took my sewing and went down to the parlor, meaning to entertain him if he was there, but he didn't come. I saw him frolicking about the yard with Sam, and wished I had been a boy so I could have gone out. It is too bad, girls always have to be so proper, and to hear so everlastingly, "My dear, that won't do for you, you are a little girl." I don't see why, as mother had Greta, I couldn't have been a boy; father would have liked it, I know.

When I was tired of waiting, I came to my room and I have been writing this up fully, which is better, I dare say, than it would have been to have spent my precious time talking with Herbert.

Dec. 21.—Mother asks if I have written all I know about Jacksonville, for the letter has come from St. Augustine, and there are some houses to rent there; so we are to go as soon as possible. I don't think there is much information to be given about Jacksonville. If it were not that I am sitting by my open window while I write, in a white cambric dress, without any wrapper, I should think I was in a new Northern city; but there are the orange trees, the houses with their broad verandahs, the yards with their pretty flower gardens in full bloom, and a great many other things that I don't even know the name of. There are the negroes too; and oh, such funny little children; and such, *such* babies! they are just as cunning and sweet as they can be; there was one in a little pink and white calico dress, span clean, that I wanted to pick up and bring in to show Greta, but when I held my hands out toward it, it just cried and turned away as if it was afraid, in the way a real, live, white baby would be. I saw Herbert playing with a mite of a ragged boy, and the way the whites of his eyes grew big — the black boy's, I mean — and he showed his teeth! Such teeth I never saw before. Herbert was putting down some chocolate candy and snatching it away just as the black hands almost touched it. He gave the boy all the candy in the end, but that I knew he would do. He is great on giving away candy.



Jacksonville is a city of about eight or ten thousand inhabitants. It has been mostly settled by Northern people, who flock here either to do business, keep boarding-houses and hotels, or live, because it is so charming for a winter home. It is built on the St. John's, not very far from the bar. The bar is a most important thing in Jacksonville—"a great bar to the growth of the place," Herbert says; but then, Herbert is always trying to say funny things, and I find it is best not to laugh at them. The bar seems to be a great collection of sand, stretching across where the ocean and the St. John's come together; and when it is low tide, no vessel of any tonnage can come over it, so it's wait, wait, wait, one side or the other, always. Last year, the "Lizzie Baker"—a small steamer that used to run on the inland route between Savannah and Enterprise, on the St. John's River—attempted to cross this bar when the tide wasn't high enough, and she was wrecked. No lives were lost; but there she lies now, and when we go home we shall see her. A wreck must be a shocking sight! I long to see one! I forgot to say—but then it is no wonder, for Hannah says I am always forgetting something—that, for sea-sick people who don't want to try the open sea, there is an inland passage, where you hug the shore all the way, and the boat stops, like a horse-car, and lets you get off and on wherever you want to. What delightful traveling it must be! If the captain of our boat would only be careful about the bar, and be sure the tide was high, how I should like the inland passage home. But all this we shall see when the time comes.

Jacksonville is a great resort for sick people. I never go out without seeing some one who looks as if death was near. It is dreadful, and I am glad we are going away. Jacksonville has several churches in it, and school-houses (white and black), and sidewalks, and stores, and people; and I guess that will do for my information about the city. I suppose I ought to add that the climate is salubrious, and the hotels and boarding-houses good. Now I am going to pack for St. Augustine, and I am glad of it.

CHAPTER VII.

GOING TO ST. AUGUSTINE.

HERE we are, in St. Augustine! But I must begin at the beginning. We went on board the splendid steamer "Hampton" at half-past nine in the morning. There are several boats on the line — rival boats. There is the "Hattie" and the "General Sedgwick;" but Phil seems to know by instinct which boat is for us, so we were *toted*, — that 's what they say here, — bag and baggage, down to the "Hampton." It is a large, handsome boat, with a long saloon, and a piano, and seats all round its sides, and decks for people to sit on, and see all there is to see. It was fuller than any of the other boats which lay alongside, and were ready to go when we did.

Sam came down to bid us good-by; so did Bessie and Mamie; and Sam said perhaps his father would come to St. Augustine, and bring Ben Pride and the boat. Ben said he could take the boat round easily enough. We were very glad to hear this, for there is water enough in St. Augustine, I suppose, to have a nice time on, and no steamers to frighten you. There were ever so many young girls on our boat, coming to St. Augustine for the winter; some of them are at the hotel with us, and I like their looks, so I think we shall get acquainted by and by. On board our boat were two colored boys: one played the harp, and the other the violin, all the time almost. People seemed to like to hear them, for when they stopped, some one would go up and give them money, and off they would start again.

Herbert gave them ever so much, until I heard his mother say, "Herbert, that will do;" and I had my money all ready, but I was so afraid I should touch one of their black hands, that I didn't dare give it to them. Mother said it was foolish in me, but I might do as I pleased; and I was really ashamed of myself when I saw Stanhope go close up to them, and sit down by them, as he would have had they been white.

"What's your name?" he asked the smaller one.

"My name is Thomas Augustus Walker," said the boy, grinning. "What's yours?"

Now, Stannie hadn't expected him to ask back, as if he had been white, so he looked surprised, but he said, right off, "Stanhope Trehorne."

"That 's a queer name," said Thomas Augustus.

"Queer! why, I suppose it is;" and Stannie laughed, and the boy laughed too, just like a white boy. Again, "What 's your name?" to the one playing on the harp.

"My name Samual Benjamin Scipio Cato George Edward John Colly Peter Paul."

"Any more?" asked Stannie, as he paused. "Should think those were only a beginning!"

Such a funny chuckle as both boys made; and then the queer one went on: "Yes, plenty more of them, — Noah Adam Sunday Tuesday Juno Cæsar Jim Sam George Washington!"

"Bram Linkum," put in the violin boy.

"Yes, Bram Linkum Man-Cipation Act."

"There, there; that will do. The last, the best, Man-Cipation Act, how are you?" and Stannie actually put his little white hand in this boy's, without seeming to mind it in the least.

"How are you?" said Man-Cipation, grinning fearfully. "'Taint no smarter than dat dar you said was yours."

"Starnnay Trahorne — what a name!" Quite a little crowd gathered round these boys while they were talking; then Phil called Stannie away. His mother never likes to have him get excited, she is so afraid it will make him sick.

Then she called us all to the side of the boat, and told us about the different places we were to pass on the way. I remember only two of them: one was Mandarin, where Mrs. Stowe lives; and the other Magnolia, where so many people seemed to be going. The boat went in about the middle of the river, unless she was to land; and, as the river is broad, we could only see low shores, with here and there a house dotted down on the banks. Not a single sour-orange grove was visible; and though I must say things look differently to me from what they would if I didn't know how they tasted, I missed them.

Toward noon, some one said, "There is Mandarin," and every one on board rushed to the side of the boat from which it was to be seen. We needn't have been in any great hurry, for we steamed slowly up to a long, broken-down sort of a wharf, and then all we could see was a few small one-story-and-a-half houses. Mrs. Stowe's was pointed out, but it didn't look in the least as I had expected to see it. "It's only Uncle Tom's cabin," said some one near me; and it didn't seem much more.

Phil said there was a fine orange grove behind it; and he asked Greta if she didn't want to land, and have a better look.

We all said, "Yes;" but the boat wasn't to stop long enough, which vexed us not a little.

Hannah showed more interest here than she had anywhere else. I heard her say to mother: "Naow this 'ere is worth comin' to Florida for. I think a heap of that woman, and I should just like to set my mortal eyes on her for once."

"I wish you could," mother said; "you don't often ask for a literary treat!"

"'Taint your literary," said Hannah pertly, considering whom she was speaking to, "but it's your flesh and blood part of it; she weren't afraid," with a nod of her head toward some negroes putting boxes on board, "she weren't afraid to call a nigger brother, nor sister."

"Afraid! no!" mother said; "why should she have been?"

"People mostly were," Hannah answered, wagging her head in her provoking way; and then our boat moved as slowly away from the wharf as it had come up. Magnolia I mustn't forget to write about, if it is only for its pretty looks. "Such a gem of a place," Greta said; and she wanted to stop there so much, that if our rooms had not been engaged in St. Augustine, mother, I am sure, would have done so. The houses are under the care of a fine physician, and very choice company gathers there. The air was dry, oranges plenty, board good, and the ground with the large trees and the tempting-looking seats, was just magnificent — I mean, lovely!

By and by we came to Tacoi. I expected to see a town, but here was only a mill for drying the moss, that it might be ready for stuffing mattresses and cushions, and a few cottages — not stuffing the cottages, I don't mean. We got into a car from the wharf, and such a queer car! It was like a long horse-railroad car, only it had seats in the middle, which turned back and forth, like those we used at home in the Sabbath-school. We filled the car full, then an engine was run down over some piles that were driven into the water, and we started. Every now and then we stopped, and some one would hop down and grease the wheels, — they are always coming to dead halts on this road, because one wheel or another of the cars is "set." "But we had just as soon stop as not," Phil said; "we came to see the country, and this gives us a nice chance."

The country wasn't unlike much that we had seen since we came into Florida. There were pine trees, and ever so many live oaks and orange trees, and some that I don't know any name for. One thing I noticed, in the woods through which we passed, there wasn't any under-brush. It looked as if you could drive about everywhere. And the moss, the moss! How beautiful!

"What do you call that?" Herbert, on the side of the cars, had his arm stretched far out through the window, pointing at something. "Why, it's a caow," said Hannah, tartly; nothing vexes Hannah so much as what she calls "an affectation of ignorance." "Didn't you ever see a caow?"

"Well, no, not like that; I've seen a *cow*," with an emphasis on the right pronunciation that made his mother shake her head at him, "but that thing is only a rack of bones! Mother, where's Stannie's milk to come from, in Florida?"

"And Greta's cream?" went on Hannah. "Sich like I never see; now I call it a sin and a shame, and if there's one, there must be a hundred on 'em, poor young critters, turned out to starve."

"I am wondering where we are to find our beef for housekeeping," said my mother, turning to Mrs. Trehorne; "certainly we can't be expected to eat such stall-fed animals as these." "Fattened on flowers at least," said Greta. Greta always will see and hear what is pretty; now, won't you think of that — beef fattened (that's an ugly word, but the thought is pretty all the same) on flowers, in this flower land named Florida. I am sure I never shall eat a mouthful without remembering it. The cows were browsing away on the top of the dead, slim-looking grass — slim grass means spindling, and I am sure I don't find anything to laugh at in that, if father does. It spindles up, just as Jack Brooks did when he was sixteen years old and six feet three inches tall, and then these grasses are so wide apart, as if they were afraid of each other. I heard Greta say to Philip, "There is something almost solemn to me in this great wilderness through which we are going; just see those avenues of trees leading no one knows where, and such curious little paths with glimpses of water."

"Horrible marshes!" said Philip, with a little shudder. "I wonder if these are the everglades of which we read so much."

"I would give ten cents to see an alligator," broke in Herbert; he is always breaking in somewhere. I never saw such a boy.

"Plenty of them round here, everywhere," said our conductor, who was passing through the cars. "Going to spend the winter in St. Augustine?"

"That's what we propose to do," said Herbert.

"Then I recommend you to take Jim Hart and go 'gator hunting with him; he catches them for the tanks!"

"What tanks?"

"Oh, you will find out before you have been long in St. Augustine, and Jim Hart is a master hand at it."

"I think I'll be excused," said Herbert, opening his mouth wide, bringing his teeth together with a snap, and then holding on to his leg and groaning.

Everybody laughed; but he isn't bashful, and in the end he laughed the loudest of us all.

"They won't hurt you," said the conductor; "Jim gets a rope round their jaws, and ties that together tight the first thing."

"I approve of Jim," said Herbert.

"Yes, he's a nice fellow, and as cheap in his charges as any one round here."

Just here one of our wheels stopped moving, and the conductor got out to see that it was well oiled. You don't know how odd it seems to stop a train of *cars* and get out, "as you would a cart, if you had gone huckleberrying," Hannah said. There was a long time taken up in oiling now, and then we started again and did not stop until we were at the depot in St. Augustine. What an army of carriages and omnibuses and darkies there were before the door! a baggage van too, and so many people,—I don't write much about the people we met, I am so full of other things, and people are the same everywhere; beside, these are all Northerners, and we have enough of them at home,—colored men to drive all the vehicles, one driving the baggage van, the blackest man I ever saw, just like ebony, with very white teeth.

We filled up a large coach and started first, and when we had plunged down into some mud holes, crossed a long bridge, and driven over a causeway, we came into a broad, fine street, where the water oaks met overhead and formed a perfect arch. I didn't notice it much, for what do you think? Our coachman took up a large horn and began to play a tune, "just as the old drivers used to in jolly England," Phil said, and Mrs. Trehorne said it made her think of the horns on the Alps — Range de raches, or something like that, she called them, but I didn't just catch the name.

Now we are at the Magnolia, and it's a quaint old place enough. I have a room out in a sort of L, with a narrow gallery running around it, and a ceiling that is made up in the roof, and it's all papered, roof and all. It has one window looking into a sort of court-yard, where at this moment some children are out in white dresses playing croquet; they have summer hats on their heads, and there's ever so many trees in full leaf all around us. But there is mother calling me to go down to tea. Days are ever so much longer here than at the North. St. Augustine forever, for me!

Next morning. — There wasn't one of us that wanted to go to bed last night, for you must know this hotel, though it looks as old as Noah's ark, has a piazza as broad as a house, and long, low windows that open down to it, so all you have to do is to step out. Last night we had a band of music; and, let me tell you, the Jubilee singers are nothing in comparison. Then there is always somebody pleasant everywhere; and Herbert is a great fellow for making acquaintance, so we had quite a party of young people on one corner of the piazza nearest the music. We might have been sitting there now, if our parents hadn't made us go to bed. Oh, I do think St. Augustine is just the most splendid place in all this wide world! and so I told my mother, but she laughed, and Greta laughed too, and Hannah just snickered. I do hate to have Hannah snicker.

This morning, after breakfast, we — that is, Greta, who is quite well, and I — went out to see the stores. You must know the Magnolia is in St. George Street, and that is where the principal stores are. But what a street! You couldn't stand in the middle and touch both sides, as Herbert said you could, and I was silly enough to believe; but it is so narrow that the shadow of one side of the street reaches away over to the other, — fifteen feet broad.

Three days after coming to St. Augustine. — I know my father supposed I was going to write every day; but that was a mistake. No one can do anything in Florida. I heard several ladies making that remark in the parlor to-day, and I don't see why children should be an exception; but I am going to write all about it now. St. Augustine is the oldest city in America. I have written, in the beginning, about the discovery of Florida, but I may as well repeat here: Ponce de Leon landed in St. Augustine in 1512, and it is now 1877, so it was discovered three hundred and sixty-five years ago. Here's a sentence that I copy right out of a book on Florida: "The foundation stone of St. Augustine was baptized in blood; and its subsequent history, for upwards of two centuries, was one of slaughter and destruction." That's the reason why the city gates were built; for once the city was walled in, to keep out enemies. How queer it sounds. It's "as good as one of Mrs. Radcliff's novels, to be here," so I heard Greta say; but I don't know anything about Mrs. Radcliff's novels myself. I'll just tell you how we went to the gates, and had our first peep at that splendid old fort; that's a great deal better than all your history writing. We didn't know what to do about Stanhope; he is the dearest child in the world, and I would do anything, *anything* for him, but his mother does not think his back strong enough to go off with us on our walks, and not one of us can bear to go and leave him at home. Phil would as soon carry him in his arms as not, but Stannie says it looks as if he were a great baby. He don't like to be stuck up in a carriage; so we had a consultation, and a bright thought struck Hannah for once; I'll give her credit.

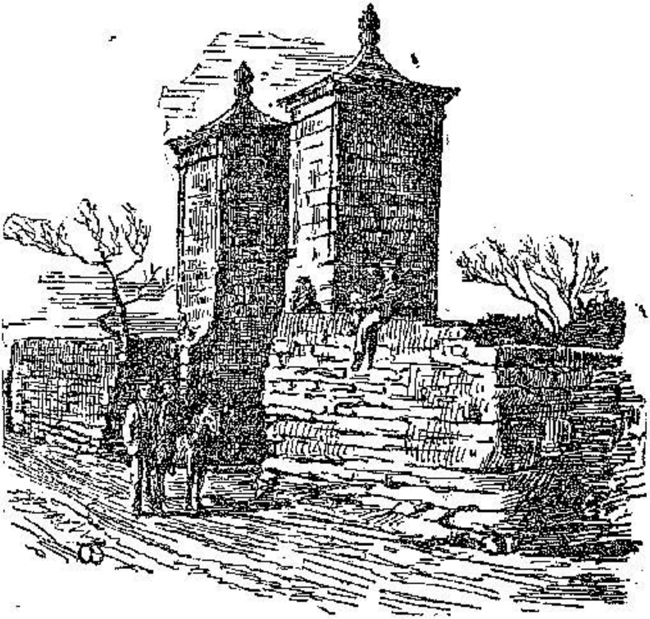
"That's it," she said, standing up straight and stark, as if she had a stiff whalebone run down the back of her neck; "get it of that little nigger; run quick!"

"What are you talking about?" said Greta, laughing and going to the window. Greta always laughs at Hannah, and I get mad.

"Why, that pony — git that; the mite of a nigger boy looks as if he was rocking in a cradle, and Stanhope can go as easy as he can sit there," pointing to the corner of the sofa where Stannie was half lying down.

"A pony!" exclaimed Phil, and then he caught his hat, and away he went. In a moment, there he was by the side of the pony, stroking and patting him, and looking into his mouth. I don't see what there is so handsome about a horse's mouth, that a man always wants to open it; I shouldn't. Then a big black man came, and Phil talked with him; then he took the black dot off the pony, and jumped on himself, and did everything with it; it was real funny to see him. Of course, we were all in the window, watching him. Herbert had gone out, and wouldn't come; but it didn't matter, he would only have plagued the pony if he had. Phil rode him up, and asked Stannie how he liked him, and Stannie was wild to go down and try him; so, after his mother had asked Phil a dozen times if he was *sure* the pony was gentle, she let him go, and Phil put Stannie on the pony's back, and off they went. Father says it takes me too long to tell a story; but I don't see why. I just wanted to say how we came to own this beautiful little "Beauty," for that's her name. Phil bought her, and Stannie is to ride her everywhere, until he is strong enough to walk. Herbert is perfectly crazy over the horse; but Phil will not let him ride, because, he says, he will be full of pranks, and he wants to keep Beauty steady. Herbert was as cross as a bear; but he don't stay cross long.

So that's the way we went to the gates the first



time. I mean to go there every day, as long as we stay here, for it is such a wonder. I wish I could draw them; but as I can't, I will paste on a little photograph here, and that will do a great deal better.

There, now, see how beautiful they are! We went to them straight up the street from the hotel; and when we reached them, what do you think was the first thing I saw? why, Herbert perched, like a monkey, on one of the gate posts! I did envy him so. Oh, if I was only a boy!

"Come down," said Phil, severely.

"You bet," said Herbert, springing up a step or two higher.

"That 's against the law," shouted Phil.

"Law, be hanged!" said Herbert, now on the very top, swinging his cap.

"Mother," said Phil, looking really troubled, "it is against the law for any one to sit on those gate posts. I wish you would speak to him."

"Well," said Hannah, who lately takes Herbert's part wherever we are, "I should say that was a curious law; what harm can a little fellow like that do to that old stone wall, I should just like to know?"

"It's to keep off the Ethiopian statues that would cluster there, I imagine," said Greta; "it's just the place for the negroes to sun themselves."

"There you 're right," said Hannah; "all the niggers are good for, so far as I know, is for sun dials. Take the shady side of 'em and you could tell the hour o' day any time."

"Herbert!" called his mother, but Herbert had disappeared over the top of a post the moment he heard her voice; so round I ran to find him.

"Come up here," he said, as soon as he saw me alone. "It's magnificently splendiferous."

So I went. He just reached his hand down, and I could walk up on the broken bits of coquino as well as not. I don't think it was unladylike in the least. Greta looked as if she would like to be there too, when they came through the gates and saw us. Both of our mothers laughed, I don't know what at, but they did, and then they made us come down. You see, the high posts of these gates — I will run and ask Greta for her description, to copy; she is so much more poetical, and I dare say she will have put in the little darkies and all. Yes, here it is; I think it is written beautifully!

"We went from our hotel to the Gates. If we had in America another well-preserved city gate, perhaps I might not feel so much disposed to lionize this, but as we have not, we make very much of it. If old Father Time had been taken into artistic employ, and hired to stop with his devastations at the very point where, by rounding, and seaming, and arching, the greatest impression would be produced, he could not have done better. Just enough of the old walls on each side of the gate remain to show their height and thickness, and these are moss and ivy covered. The pillars of the gate are whole, even to the pomegranate that crowns them, and the port holes are perfect in their loosened coquino and springing green."

"'Picturesque, if ever a ruin was!' said Mrs. Treborne.

"'Perfect!' said my mother, sitting down on a small bridge over the moat, and fixing her eyes admiringly upon it.

"'What's that moat for?' asked Maggie, who will ask ten questions to everybody else's one."

And how am I to learn, if I don't ask, I should like to know. I think that's unfair in Greta; but I can't help going on with my quotation.

"'The water was let on from the San Sebastian and carried up through this moat to flood the deep one around the fort,' said Phil, who always has studied up everything.

"'Please tell us about the coquino of which the building is said to be all done in St. Augustine,' I asked him, with a bit of the old gate in my hand.

"Phil took a book out from his pocket and read me, 'Coquino is a most singular conglomerate of shells cemented by carbonate of lime; a recent formation that is found nowhere else in the world. It is soft when first taken out from the quarry, but becomes hard from exposure to the air.'

"'Clongemerated carbonated lime,' said Herbert. 'I, for one, shall remember all about it!'"

Now, that will do for the useful and the beautiful. I want to write how Beauty went down into the moat for some tempting-looking green grass that was there, and all Stannie could do, he couldn't keep her out. No sooner had she got fairly down, than a dozen little black imps seemed to spring up right out of the ground, and they set up such a whoop! Mrs. Trehorne turned very pale for fear it would frighten the pony; but what does Beauty do but wag her big brown ears and switch her long tail, as if she was thoroughly used to them and they were the best friends she had in the world. I haven't told you how Beauty looks; she deserves her name if ever any pony did. She is chestnut brown, with four white feet; "knock her on the head and throw her to the crows," Herbert says, every time he sees her, and it's all for that miserable old white nose, that happens to rhyme with crows. We mean to be very kind to her, give her sugar and everything to make her love us just as ponies do children in story books. Stannie has a little saddle with a sort of horn stuck up in front and back—"made a puppose," Hannah said, as she fixed a wadded cover out of her old blanket shawl. Hannah is a treasure when any one is sick, and she is devoted to Stannie, who seems to love her back, which is a wonder to me. The gates are wonderful too, and this will do for now, because we are going out house hunting this afternoon, and I want to put in a few words more to-night, to say what we have found.

Evening.—We have found our house! It's coqui no! It's down, not on Marine Street, but somewhere where we look over a nice lawn, that belongs to some great general, and see the water and the islands and the lighthouse, and — everything else. Oh, it's the most romantic house in the world! More about it to-morrow. I can hardly keep my eyes open to see where my pen goes.

Next morning. — Yes, the house *is* perfect, and all ready for rent so we move into it to-day. I am sorry to leave this pleasant hotel; but only think of our being in a house of our own!

CHAPTER VIII.

MAGGIE TAKES A RIDE.

HERE we are; and such a room as I have, words will fail me to describe. The house is, oh, two thousand years old, I I believe! No; two thousand may be too much; but it is ever and ever so old, and the walls are coquino, of course, there being no other kind of stone found in this locality. I wonder if any Spaniard lived here. I think they must have, for Mrs. Treborne says it looks precisely like some of the very old houses she used to see in Spain, only the coquino makes a vast difference: it is full of shells on the outside, just shells stuck together, — beautiful, beautiful shells, of all sizes, from the little bits to the big oyster-shells, which, when turned the pearl side out, are not so bad; and there are arches and porticoes and verandahs built right out of the second story. You see, the streets are so narrow that very often the only way they can have a piazza is to hang it out right over head. You can't imagine how droll it is to look up and see these things as you walk. Our house has the street close up on one side, and on the other a large yard, with, oh, such beautiful roses! Mother looked into my journal the other day, and said, "Maggie, it seems to me as if every fourth word was *such*, italicized." But I can't help it, they are *such* roses, and all in full bloom now, on the very last of December; and they are trained to form an arch over our gate. There is only one fault I can find with the house. We have but two orange trees on the place, and neither of them is large. I don't think they will bear half the fruit we want. But I was telling you about the house. There are rooms, and rooms, and rooms; a big parlor, and two large bed-rooms opening out of it: these are for Mrs. Trehorne and Stannie, and mother with Greta. The boys and I go up-stairs into another story. I forgot to say you come into the house through a fine arched door-way, and there is the dining-room and the stairs and pantry, and big doors, and windows almost like shop doors, which we are to keep locked. I wanted the cunningest room that ever was made, up in the third story, and they let me have it. The roof is old Spanish, I suppose, as everything else is, and my room is right in it, with the queerest little window! I wish I could draw it, for never was one like it built anywhere else. I have a straw matting, a set of cottage furniture, and a white window-shade; and the boys' room is as like it as two peas in a pod, furniture and all; it is next door, too, so I feel perfectly safe from burglars, for Phil looks as if he would be courageous.

I haven't set to rights yet. I wanted to tell my journal all about it first. I think now I may as well begin; and I do hope Hannah will keep out of the way, and let me do as I please.

I was busy as a bee, fixing, Hannah fortunately finding things down-stairs needed all her time, when mother called to me,—

"Do you want to go shopping with Herbert?"

Of course I did; so there was a long list made out, and we were sent to hunt up market, grocery stores, etc. Herbert thinks he knows everything, and mother says, "So does Maggie;" but it is easy to find fault with any one, though my mother is the kindest, darlingest, best mother in the world! We took a big cedar basket we had brought our lunch in, and off we went.

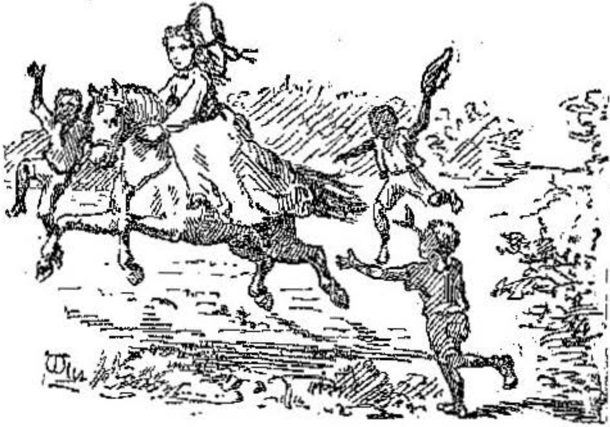
"Eggs, butter, cheese, bread! stick, stack, stone dead!" Herbert kept saying, as we went along. It was to be market first. "A nice roast for dinner," Hannah had said, "a sirline roast. Now, don't ye get nothin' else, fer by the way the critters looked out a-pasturin', we shall have tough job enough over 'em, — and a porter-house steak, and any birds you see that 's nice."

"It 's just as good as Robinson Crusoe," I told Herbert over and over again, as we went up the street, but he only "pooh-ooh-ed" at me in that disagreeable way boys have. The groceries didn't amount to anything. It was just like going into a store at the North, and buying what you wanted; but when we asked for the meat market, we found it was never open after eight in the morning, so the grocer told Herbert he had better buy some canned meat, and a salted tongue or two, with perhaps a ham; and we talked it over, and concluded we had, for Hannah would be as mad as hops if we went home without anything. So we bought four cans of roast beef, to take the place of the sirloin roast; three cans of beef-steak; two neats tongues; and a big ham, for boiling. The man said he had some nice corned beef, and Herbert said that would do to slice down for tea, and we bought twelve pounds of that. Then we felt as happy and proud as could be, and went home to tell them about it; but what do you think, our mothers looked perfectly dismayed, and Hannah said, with such a shout, —

"Ketch me a-trustin' ye agin; be ye born fools?"

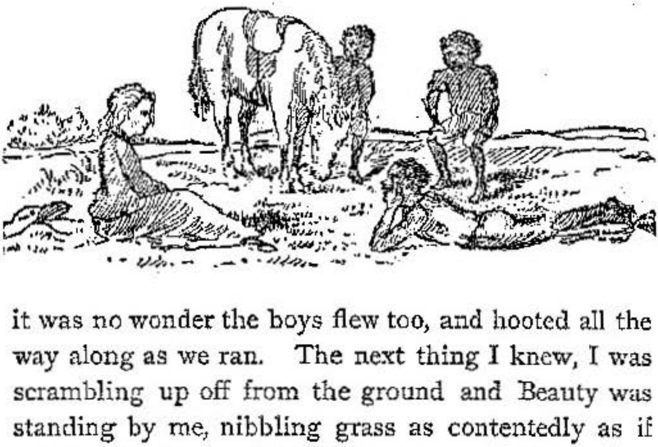
I can't now see what the trouble was. I have no doubt it will all be very nice; indeed, I am sure the man said it was; but the next time, Hannah may go to the early market herself.

Wednesday.—I am sure it was no plan of mine, "it did itself," as the children say, and this was the way it happened. Stanhope had been to ride on Beauty, and she was standing hitched to a post before our front door, which is really our back gate. I only meant to jump on and, as there was no one round, try her, and see how it would seem to ride on horseback. It had always been the ambition of my life to own a horse, a pony, and go when and where I pleased. I meant to have a jockey hat with a long plume, and a long riding skirt that almost swept the ground, and I—but that's no matter. I don't see anything wrong in wanting to know how it would seem to be on horseback, as I have said, and as I unhitched Beauty and mounted her, putting my knee over the front horn, holding with one hand on to the horn on the back, and gathering up the reins as Stannie did with the other, I thought I would just go a few steps, when I saw how splendid it was, and so I twitched the reins and said, "Get up, get up, get up!" She didn't seem to mind me in the least, but just walked along kind of sidewise, I thought, so I twitched her mouth and banged her with my heel, and then, dear me, I don't know what happened. My hat came off, and I was so afraid I should lose it, that I let go of the horse and tried to catch it, and then I let go of the reins and tried to get hold of the horn again, and then — well, yes, I guess I must have made a little noise, perhaps just said, "oh dear," or called my "mother," for the next thing I knew ever so many boys were running after me and shouting, "Stop him! Stop him! Here's a go! I say, missis, kitch up dem dare lines! Hold on dare, missis! Ky! Ky! Kitch hold dem lines, missis! Ky! Ky!" and other most horrible sounds, until I knew I was dead, and never, never, never should see my mother again. Down we went past the barracks, and a soldier with a gun over his shoulders stood right in the road; I suppose he thought it was all a frolic and I was doing it on purpose, for he only moved out



of the way and laughed — which was very unkind indeed. I never, never, never can forgive him to the latest hour of my life.

There was the water and a great open field, and Beauty went tearing on as if she meant to go through it all, and then end by throwing me over her head into the water. How I ever held on was a wonder — it was a miracle; for she seemed to me to fly, and my hair flew, and my arms flew, and my dress flew; so I think after all, now I am writing about it, it was no wonder the boys flew too, and hooted all the way along as we ran. The next thing I knew, I was scrambling up off from the ground and Beauty was standing by me, nibbling grass as contentedly as if nothing in the world had happened. There were perhaps twenty negro boys round me, and there they were, rolling about every way: some standing on the tops of their heads, some bent up double, and some twirling about on their heels as if they were learning



to dance, — but all shouting. I do believe I laughed too, for I wasn't hurt a bit, and they did look so jolly I couldn't help it.

It didn't take me long to scramble up, and then I asked the biggest boy — "Do you dare catch that pony?"

"Dare! dat little fellar? Ky! Ky! Here, you rat;" and he took hold of the bridle as if he had been used to her all his life. One thing I can't forgive him for; when he had fixed the saddle and the bridle all straight, he led the pony up to me and said, —

"How you gwine for to get on?"

"To — to — get on?" I faltered.

"Yas! How you gwine for to mount her?"

"Mount her?"

"Dat dere hos, missis; how you gwine for to ride her home?"

"Ride her home? Couldn't you possibly lead her? She's very gentle and kind," I went on, venturing near enough to Beauty to pat her, in the hope of assuring the boy of the feasibility of leading her; "a little sick boy, not nearly as big as you are, rides her every day, and she never ran away before. Could you *possibly* lead her home? I will pay you well for it." "Yas, dat's the way," and without another word this impudent little negro sprang from the ground on to Beauty's back, and the last I saw of them they were going like lightning around the corner by the barracks.

I came home as quick as I could; fortunately I had been down on the sea wall the night before, and I could see that at only a short distance before me. I never thought that I hadn't any hat on my head, until I burst into the house, and Greta said, —

"Why, Maggie, what a fright you are! Where have you been, and where is your hat?"

Then, of course, I had to tell them the whole truth, and I never was more surprised in my life than when Philip said soberly, —

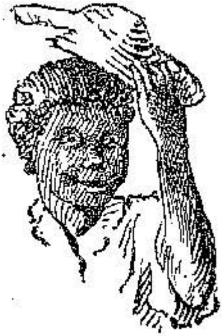
"That ends Beauty!" and went out of the room. To be sure no Beauty had come home, and even now, while I am writing, she has not been found. Oh dear! dear! dear! I feel so dreadfully I don't know what else to do, so I come up here and tell my journal all about it. If Beauty has been stolen and never comes back, all my happiness for my whole life is over. I shall never smile again. The fear is that she will be, at any rate, injured beyond recovery, and Stannie looks as if he had already cried his eyes out. I will write to my father by the next mail, and ask him to buy Stanhope the very handsomest pony there is in Boston, and send him on by the next steamer. I shall never want to see those barracks again, or hear the mention of the words "sea wall." It will never be anything but negro boys hooting runaway ponies and lost Beauty, to me.

P. S. — Nobody blames me, even Hannah does not scold; but when no one sees him, Herbert braces himself and pulls back with his two hands, as if he was trying his best to hold up a horse, working his lips into the word "Whoa;" but he is sorrier than any of us to lose the pony; and I haven't said a word of my letter to my father. I am so very, *very* sorry. Poor, darling little Beauty! And poor Stanhope! I never will ride a horse again as long as I live and breathe and have my being.

Next day. — Phil has been out all day looking for Beauty in vain. Poor, unhappy me!

Friday. — Now I am perfectly happy, for this morning, when we were at breakfast, we heard a neighing, and, looking out of the window, we saw Beauty! The same boy that was riding her when Phil bought her was tying her to the post, and talking away to her, as if he loved her dearly. Didn't we all run out, even Hannah, wiping her hands on the corner of her apron — a trick she has when she is very much excited.

The boy said the horse was ridden home the night before by Cato Pratt, and was so tired out that his father put her up in the stable, and fed her, instead of sending her home. I never saw such a queer face as Phil had: it was half pleased and half angry, and he just asked where that Cato Pratt lived, as if he meant to punish him if he ever put his hands on him. Of course, we all gave the boy some money. I ran out, after the rest had gone, and tucked all I had into his hand. I felt as if I couldn't pay him too much, though I did want my spending-money for something else. There is no end to the beautiful things that are to be bought here: such feathers, wings of tropical birds; and such beans, — sea-beans, — made up into all kinds of jewelry. I must take home presents to everybody I know; but then, I don't mean to lose Beauty again; and father always sends me my spending-money every month! The way Stannie and I hugged and kissed Beauty may be better imagined than described; even Herbert I caught with both arms round her neck, and I think he kissed her too, though I heard his mother say he was just the age when a boy was ashamed to kiss or be kissed. How foolish that is! A girl is never too old! I don't feel as if it was necessary to write anything in my journal but, "Beauty has come! Beauty is found!"



CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTMAS IN FLORIDA.

CHRISTMAS Day! and such a splendid day as we have had. All of us but Stannie are too old for stockings. They said I wasn't, and I was tempted to put one up. I should have, if I hadn't been afraid Herbert would laugh at me. We waked ever so early, at least I did, and Herbert—I found him in the hall, tiptoeing to his mother's room to catch her. I went out so softly behind him that I stepped on to him suddenly at the head of the stairs, and whispered "Merry Christmas" at him before he saw me. You should have seen him jump and look scared, which was silly. Then we both tiptoed down-stairs, and there were both doors of both mothers' rooms left wide open—I think they did it on purpose,—and we went creep, creep, creeping in, when Herbert stumbled over a foot-stool, and made an awful noise. I snickered out so loud — snickered isn't a pretty word, but it's just what I did — that if my mother and Greta had been asleep, I know it would have waked them; but as it was, neither of them stirred or opened their eyes; and I heard Herbert snicker too, so I knew his mother was making believe, as mine was. We both of us had hard work to wake them up, which wasn't quite natural. Then we thought we would go to Hannah's room. "It's like bearding the lion in his den," I whispered to Herbert, rather shaking in my shoes; but he said, "Pooh, I shouldn't be afraid if she was a bear; come ahead!" So I opened her door as softly as possible, and there were her windows wide open, and an empty bed; but the worst was, just as we turned to go away we heard her laugh — one of those laughs she gives when she has ever so much the better of you. "Merry Christmas!" I called out, turning my head every way in a minute.

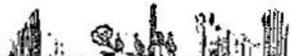
"'Pears likely," said a voice from somewhere.

"You, Hannah," shouted Herbert; "Greta wants you quick, she is very sick."

"'Pears likely," said the voice again, but no Hannah.

"Why, Herbert Trehorne, how can you tell such a story. Hannah, Greta is as bright as a rubbed button."

"'Pears likely," once more; and then through the open window of the verandah, close behind us, came Hannah's wrinkled face. It did look so funny, for at the side of the piazza grew a large climbing rose which had been trained to come in and almost cover the window. Just on the top of Hannah's gray hair was one large red rose, and two more fell on the sides of her cheek. I never thought our old Hannah could have been half so poetical sort of looking as when she peeped in upon us this Christmas morning, with her "Merry Christmas!" Then we thought we would go out and see what was doing, so we crept out softly for fear Phil would wake up and catch us; but he is too old and sober to care much for such things now.

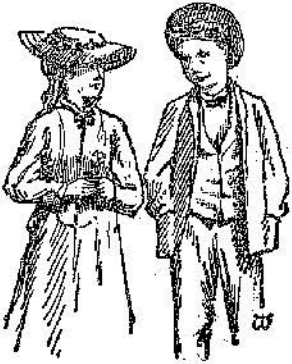


St. Augustine is always awake early in the morning. You would think no one had ever gone to bed; so now the streets were full of people, almost all black, sauntering along, as only a Southern negro can saunter. We wished everybody "a merry Christmas" that we met; and to hear how cordially they wished it back, you would have thought they had known and loved us all our lives. The morning was warm, so warm that I put on a white piqué and Herbert had on a flannel sack. Every garden we passed seemed to us to be full of flowers, all saying, "Merry Christmas," Herbert said, and we wished them the same back. When I was telling Greta about it, she said she was afraid if any one heard us we should have been thought quite wild; but I am sure we behaved with the most perfect propriety. And now I have an odd thing to write about; but just let me say, we looked into several of the churches, or we tried to. There had been midnight mass in the old cathedral, and it was so full of bad air and incense, we went out as fast as we went in. It is such a curious old church, the oldest in the country. You don't know how queerly it was dressed with evergreens and artificial flowers. There were some horrible pictures there, and such a queer sort of a big painted woman, meant to represent the Virgin Mary, with her head and dress all covered with artificial flowers; but the queerest thing was, that we saw two people moving about around the altar, and we supposed they were some Catholics come to say their prayers, so we were going out quietly, not to disturb them, when Herbert gave me a pull, and said:

"That's jolly; come in here, and when they go home we will pop out on them!"

"Who? What are you talking about, Herbert Trehorne?" I asked.

"Why, Greta and Phil! Don't you see them?" pointing to the two figures before the altar.



"Greta and Phil!" I repeated, and then I made a rush toward them, and sure enough, there they were.

They didn't hear us until we were close to them; and Greta — well, she wasn't frightened, only she was listening very intently to what Phil was saying. I don't know as I ought to be always watching them when they are alone together; but it would be so nice — you know what I mean.

I don't think they were very glad to see us, and I couldn't help suspecting that might be a good sign. We didn't want to stay, either, for we were going to the fort, and if they had suspected it, they might have made us go home.

Mother hasn't become used to the sea-wall yet. She says it is so narrow, and so steep on the water side, that she would rather I would not go there without some one to take care of me. I should think I was old enough to take care of myself; but I am never happy 'way down in my heart if I don't do as my mother likes to have me.

Herbert said, "We will only go to see how the old fort takes Christmas, and not go in now;" but he always says so before he goes there, and then he never can resist a run round the walls. There are some Indians there now,—real, savage Indians,—who are prisoners of war. They were taken in battle, and have killed ever and ever so many white people. They came with scalps of white people braided into their long black hair; but I must keep them to write about at some other time. Herbert said, when we came in sight of the fort, that it was a sleepy old thing, and hadn't waked up yet! And it did look so differently, in the gray Christmas light, from what it had before, covered with people. Nobody was stirring, only a beautiful little light-fawn greyhound, which came up on top of one of the broken bits of the big old wall, and stood looking down on us. The funniest was that when Herbert took off his hat and shouted, "A merry Christmas," to it, the dog sent back a sharp bark, as if it had fully appreciated, and was returning it. "I'll pick Stannie a bit of that creeping plant from the wall," I said to Herbert, as we stood looking up at them; "he's such a dear little fellow, and never can come with us. I'll put it in his stocking."

"You'll have to squeeze it in then," said Herbert, "for the stocking was crammed. What a brick that boy is!"

"Come, let's go home," I answered. I had forgotten all about the stocking, and I was as interested as Stannie to see what was in it.

Herbert didn't want to go — he never does when he is at the fort; but he went, and walked home on the wall, while I trotted along just under it, close by his side. I wonder what makes mothers so careful of the very things their children like most to do. I wanted so much to see the sun twinkling down on the water.

Such a beautiful room as we found when we came home, surely never was seen before. It was just like magic, and I can't even now find out how it was done. The dining-room and parlor were trimmed with evergreen wreaths, and flowers were put around everywhere. "Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!" Why, it seemed just as if Christ had been born since we went away, and the whole house had been put in order to receive him. At first, Herbert didn't say a word, he just put his hands down to the bottom of his pockets and whistled. Not a soul was to be seen, and then I heard a little laugh from the stairway, and we knew Stannie must be peeping at us from somewhere; so I tried to look unconcerned and not surprised in the least, but my eye suddenly caught sight of the end of one of Hannah's aprons shut in the door, then I laughed and screamed, for I knew we had come before they had expected us, and she hadn't quite time to get away. But what do you think Herbert did when I nudged him and pointed to it? He went across the room as softly as a cat, and just pinned that apron down to the side of the door with the blade of his knife. Wasn't that real boy? Hannah would have torn her new apron, and that might have made her cross all day, if Greta hadn't come in just at this moment and taken the knife out. Whatever Greta does, no matter who or what it is for, is always right. I wish I could get the secret. Herbert just went up and kissed her. I think Phil don't like to see him kiss her quite so often, he always says, "Don't be rude, Herbert," as if he would like to box the boy.

It was the mothers did this, all by themselves. Phil and Greta were as much surprised as we were, and that was the oddest part of it. They feel so old most of the time, that if we put an o after their teens, Herbert or I should not be surprised in the least. But then it is better, on some accounts, you know, that they should feel pretty old. I wonder if Christmas wouldn't be a good day for them to begin! Mother always told me it was a day to love everybody in general. I don't see, then, why not some one in particular.

Greta opened the door for Hannah to run away with her apron, as she supposed, but lo! no Hannah was there; only a little brown wad on the floor.

"What do you think on the subject of penknives?" Phil asked, shrugging his shoulders toward Herbert; but Herbert always has an answer.

"I think they 're very good when they 're sharp," he answered, as unconcerned as possible. "What a cute old woman she is, though."

"Too old a bird for chaffing; remember that, sir," Phil said. Phil can say decided things when he pleases, but he doesn't often interfere.

Stanhope had such hosts of presents; we all had poured a deluge upon him, so I couldn't help saying to mother when we were alone together, that I should like to try being sick for a little while, to see how it would seem.

"Oh, my dear," she said, "you don't know what you are talking about;" but she says that very often, so I don't always mind, and, to be sure, I had some real Florida presents myself. There was the loveliest duck's breast for the front of my hat, next winter, or for a skating cap, if I prefer, from Greta; then, such a set of jewelry from Mrs. Trehorne, it was enough to make any girl crazy, and the most singular thing is that it is made entirely of fish scales. These scales — I may as well tell you here as anywhere — are taken off from the fish, dried, then cut into any form desired, and strung on small silver wires. Flowers of all kinds are made — butterflies, bows, knots; mine were lovely forget-me-nots, just as delicate as spun glass. I have pin and ear-rings, and Greta has the same, with the addition of a lovely head ornament which looks so beautiful in her hair. Greta grows lovelier every day and is not so delicate; she does cough now and then, but she is full of fun, and who ever heard of anybody full of fun — dying. I think mamma was needlessly frightened about her, but then, it is so nice to spend the winter in Florida that I don't feel like complaining. I suppose I ought to write down the rest of my presents; of course father will feel the greatest interest in them. Well then, Greta gave me a work basket, made of a kind of long grass which grows wild around here; the girls, or ladies, — there now, I 'll write women, and that means everybody, — pick and dry it, then fasten the strands together with silk, or a delicate silver or gold thread; they make baskets, and boxes, and card cases, and card receivers, and needle books, and cigar holders, and match boxes, and almost everything under the sun. Then, mother gave me a fan, and if ever there were any elegant things made in this world, these fans are the things. They are made from all kinds of birds' feathers, but mine is the crowning beauty; it's like a rose bud in color; it 's the pink curlew; the feathers are the loveliest of all rose tints, "where the rose melts into snow," I heard Greta say to Phil, and I think it was so pretty I can't help writing it down. The feathers are spread and the fan is round, but in the centre, above where the handle is fastened, there is the most exquisite bunch of feather flowers. Mine is a sort of daisy, I don't know what, but as perfect and as beautiful as any live flower that ever was seen. I shall treasure this fan as the most perfect Christmas gift of my whole life; and my work basket, and my scale jewelry, and then my white japonica that Herbert gave me. He whispered to me as if he was almost ashamed of it, that "he didn't buy that thing, his mother did," but I thought it was a true japonica until I had it close in my hand and saw the feathers. They are dyed to imitate leaves and are in all shades of color, so there is nothing to prevent any flower being imitated. Talk of wax flowers! one ought to see these made here, and they never would look at the stiff things again. Phil gave me a set of sea beans jewelry. "What is that?" I don't wonder you ask, but St. Augustine is full of it made up into every thing — ear-rings, compasses, sleeve-buttons, necklaces, crosses, bracelets, stands for vases, etc., etc., etc., too numerous to mention. These beans are washed up from the sea and are found quite abundantly on the seashore around Tampa Bay, and at Cedar Keys, and at Key West. They come, too, from the Bahamas, and abundantly from Nassau. The jewelers buy them by the bushel, as we buy baked beans, and in the state they buy them they are rough and not in the least pretty, but they take on a most beautiful polish. The Indian prisoners here do a great deal of this work, but that I will tell you about by and by, when we go to see them.

My ear-rings and pin are a most delicate drab, handsomely set in gold; but Greta's, that Phil gave her, you ought to see them! Splendissamo, splendidorus, magnificentissimus, glorissimus! that is all the description I can give of them, and I have no doubt papa will say that will suffice; but big words alone apply to big beauties like these. I think Greta prefers her scale jewelry, but she thinks both handsome enough. Stannie gave me a lunch bag made out of palmetto, and Hannah a palmetto hat. This palmetto work is the great work of St. Augustine. I can't stop to write about it now, but it is everywhere — flowers, feathers, hats, bonnets, flags, toys — no end to it. Oh, am I not glad I came South!

Perhaps I ought to put in, in a few words, what I gave the others. I gave Herbert a compass made out of a sea bean, for he means to do great things as a wild hunter, he tells me, if he lives long enough, and this will be so useful to him when without it he might be lost forever in the wilds of some trackless forest. So I told him when we were alone together, and I must have looked real sober, for I felt so sorry to think of all he would suffer if he should be, but he laughed and said he guessed the woods hadn't grown yet in America where he couldn't make his way with the famous rifle he meant to own when he is a man. I think he has read too many stories of adventures by land or by sea; he is always talking about them when we are alone together, and sometimes I am afraid he really may go; then how badly his poor mother would feel. I was almost sorry afterwards, when I heard how he went on, that I had given him the compass. I was afraid it might incline him more to adventures.

I gave Stannie a whip to drive Beauty with, made of palmetto, with an alligator tooth for the end of the handle. Now, if there is one ugly thing in all this wonderful St. Augustine, made into beauties, it is these same alligators' teeth. They are of all sizes, and so are used for everything — handles for canes and whips, studs, sleeve-buttons, ear-rings, breast-pins, rattles, perfume bottles, whistles, and pendants everywhere.

N. B.—If any one is going to St. Augustine, don't let them venture near there without a great deal of spending money; there is no end to the lovely things exposed for sale.

I picked out two fans, one for my mother, of most delicate gray, and one for Mrs. Trehorne, of pure white; but when I came to ask the price I found they were five dollars each, so I had to put them back, and

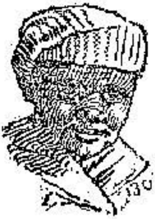
I almost cried, I was so disappointed. Everything is costly here; they talk about the *poor* South, but I don't see what keeps people from being as rich as Crœsus, if they get so much money for what they do. Mother says she supposes it's the old story of middlers here, as they are everywhere else. I don't exactly understand what middlers are, though all the rest seemed to, even to Stannie; but Stannie is a wonderful boy and knows twice as much as I do about everything. I suppose my father would say that I should have asked, for to improve was the very thing he sent me to St. Augustine for. Still, I don't like to seem like a ninny.

I never shall get through telling about my presents. I gave Phil a handsome shell; he is very fond of shells, and means to make a collection while he is here. By and by we are to have sea excursions; we are to go out where the beaches are covered with shells, and all we have to do is to stoop down and scoop them up by the double handful. Think of that, will you? I gave the mothers two little palmetto baskets, just alike, to put the ends of their threads in when they are sewing. Greta chose them for me after I got bewitched over the fans and couldn't see anything else. For Greta I bought a lunch bag, just like mine. She is going to work hers with worsted in a way that will be elegant; perhaps I may too, but I don't know, my worsted work always hangs fire. I bought Hannah a stuffed alligator—well, I know it wasn't handsome, but I wanted to hear what she would say, and she didn't say; she just took it to the light, sniffed; turned it over, sniffed, turned it back again, sniffed, held it up by its tail, sniffed, held it up by its head, and then said "Cur'us!" Herbert says it wasn't anything of a go after all, and as he put me up to buy it, I think he was rather disappointed.

If I had just known all that was coming and not spent a cent for a year, shouldn't I have been happy! But it was very nice as it was.

There, I have forgotten to write a word about the two other members of our family, who are so important: our cook, old Theresa, and her niece, Ida.

Theresa is, no one can guess how old, for after the negroes reach a certain age, they never seem to change short of a hundred. Well, she was a slave once in Charleston, South Carolina, and her master used to hire her out. Sometimes she would go as nurse, sometimes as cook. She had been cook in a hotel, and on board a steamboat, so she understood her business well. She was such a nice-looking woman—black as ebony, with kind, good eyes, that I love to look at, and big lips, but always opening to say a pleasant thing. She wears a



turban on her head; so do all the old negroes, but hers is as neat as a pin, not a bit like the yellow and red ones I see round the streets. She wears dark calico dresses, with a little kerchief of some kind crossed over the bosom, and an apron made of burlap; this coarse, brown thing they all seem to wear. She is as pleasant as a May morning, but the kitchen is separate from the house, (ain't that droll?) and the mothers say we children had better not get into the habit of running into it. I am sorry, for it would be such fun to talk with her.

Then there is her niece, Ida; and Ida is a beauty. I don't know how it happened, but she is as white as I am, with the loveliest blue eyes, and light hair "that doesn't wool it!" That's what Herbert calls the negroes' head covering, "wooling it." Well, Ida's doesn't wool it, nor even curl close as mine does, but it just waves in those long, beautiful waves so elegant to behold. She is twelve years old, but small at that. There is some pathetic story which mother says she would rather I wouldn't ask about. She is our little table girl and waitress; and she "is as graceful as a fawn," Greta says, and looks so happy when you speak kindly to her. The mothers decided we had better not begin by playing with her, for then she would be disappointed when we didn't want her with us, though we are always to be very kind to her, and never to hurt her feelings. Hannah has the general care of her; but Hannah does not like black people, and it is as good as a play, Phil says, to see her turn up her nose when she can't possibly help it. She tries to be good, Greta says; and what more can possibly be asked of any human being.

I gave Ida a new buff calico dress, and Theresa a white apron, frilled around. The courtesy she made me, and the sound of her sweet voice, wishing me "many merry Christmases," was alone worth coming to Florida for; but if I go on finding so many, many things every day, what will become of me, and what a thing my journal will be, I hardly dare to think.

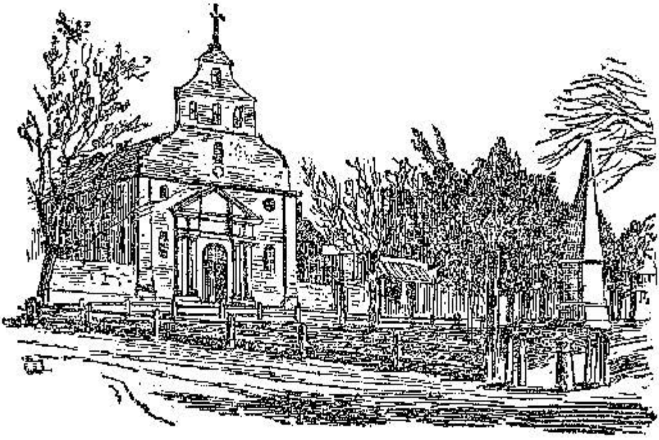
Our presents we mean to keep as long as we live, to remember our Christmas here by. Now I have written enough. I will go out for a walk.

CHAPTER X.

PATIENCE SHOWS MR. ATWOOD'S GARDEN.

THE mothers went with us and Greta went too. It made me so happy to have her go that I fairly danced about "like an old cat," Herbert said. I thought a kitten wouldn't have sounded so — well, so old cat-ish, but Herbert always will say what he has a mind to.

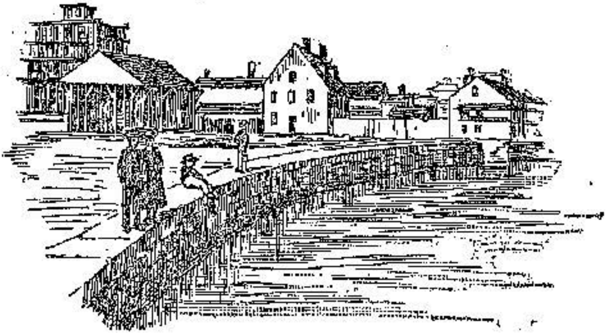
As we were all together, we went first to the only church that was open, the Episcopal one, on the Plaza. The Plaza is a small common, with a few trees on it, some walks, a monument, and a few benches, which are always full of chatting colored people. It is as old as the hills, has always been here, and has the Cathedral and hotels on one side, with the old Governor's house, or the old house used as a government building, where the post-office now is, on the other, and stores on the third, and the market-house on the fourth. I don't think much of things because they are old, and Herbert says "he likes the spandy-dandy new ones best," but I want to tell you now about our walk, and not about the Plaza. We went into the Episcopal Church for a few minutes. There were plenty of wreaths and crosses, just as we have them at the North, and beside, ever so many pretty banners, belonging to the Sabbath School children of the church, who had a celebration. We only stayed a few minutes there, for people were passing in and out constantly, and mother was afraid Greta might take cold, going from a close room into the night air, so down we went to have a moonlight walk on the sea-wall. It s always so pleasant, so much pleasanter



than any other time, if the mothers are with us. Don't you see, then it don't have to be, Maggie, what does your mother wish? for that troublesome old conscience of mine to be asking all the time; it's only to ask mother herself, and that ends it. If mother hadn't been here to-night, I should have had to trot along like a—yes, just like a dog, by Herbert's side, for he would have been on the wall, of course; but now we went up the steps before the druggist's store, and then turned our faces toward the Fort—have I ever told you what its name is?—but no, I won't tell you even that, until I tell you the whole story. I will learn to methodize, as mother wishes; but I never shall get on to the wall at this rate. Mother asked me to take her arm, as soon as we stepped on the wall; wasn't that funny? I generally run about "as wild as a hawk," Hannah says, but then Hannah's comparisons are not always to be trusted. The wall is about three feet wide, and extends from the Fort to the Barracks, a distance of nearly a mile. Its height differs, according to the lay of the land; sometimes it seems quite high, and then there are places where you can step on to the street—Marine Street, I mean, for on the ocean side the descent is sheer down to the shore, and, at high tide, the water comes nearly up to a level with the top of the wall; no, not quite as high as that, but so high that the waves make you dizzy, and there is actual danger of falling if you are not careful. Mrs. Trehorne took Phil's arm, and Greta said, —

"Herbert, I don't see but you and I will have to walk together. May I take your arm?"

Herbert is a real gentleman when he chooses to be, and I was surprised to see, as I walked behind them, how well he and Greta looked together. He is almost as tall as she is, and stepped along on that wall without the least fear.



When we were about half way to the Fort, Phil said something to his mother, then jumped from the wall, and ran away. His mother would not tell us where he was going, though we teased to know, and it broke our line of march all up. The mothers walked together, and I between them and Greta.

Such a boy as Herbert is! There were ever so many other people walking on the wall, and when he met a company going the other way, he would try to dodge them, just as if he didn't mean to get in their way, instead of out of it. Then they would all laugh good-naturedly, and pass on, with a polite "excuse me."

I am going to copy here what Greta wrote to my father about the harbor of St. Augustine on this moonlight night, it is so beautiful. I would give anything if I could think of such things, but I never shall. "This harbor of St. Augustine, to-night," she writes, "was witchingly beautiful. The broad ocean does not come up to the shore, but narrows into the rivers Matanzas and North. St. Augustine is built on the Matanzas, but the North comes into it near the Fort. Directly opposite this great little city is the long island of Anastasia, separated by water, almost covered with boats. There is very little shipping here. Now and then, a schooner comes in from the North, or a small government steamer puts in for supplies, but generally the harbor is full of boats of all shapes and sizes, and used for every purpose. Last night dozens of sailboats, with their pretty sails fluttering in the wind, were flying about everywhere, looking like great white swans. I so wanted a sail in one of them, but I knew mother would say it was too damp; indeed, I was only too glad to be allowed to be on the wall at all. The big moon had come up over the North beach, a point of land that juts out from the North River, and it was wonderful to see what shadows it made on the water—long lines of light, with opal, and amethyst, and pearl grays, such pearl grays as never would be seen anywhere else."

There, that must do; it's slow copying, and I want to tell you what happened. We had walked out to the Fort, and back again to the druggist's store, when Herbert exclaimed,—

"So that is what's up, is it?"

"What?" I exclaimed; somehow I am always the first one to speak. "I don't see anything."

"You don't? What is that?"

"It's a man and a horse."

"It's Phil and Stannie;" then off he leaped, and I followed him, and, dear me, it was such a surprise that we both made as much of a fuss over Stannie as if we hadn't seen him for a month. Phil had gone for Beauty, wrapped Stannie up well, and here he was. Now our cup of joy was full, for there hadn't been one of us who could forget the little sick boy left lonely at home, though he had said over and over again that he wasn't lonely, with all his new presents, and would rather we would go than not—but Stannie is an angel, he is so good.

We went down to the Barracks, Beauty walking along by the side of the fence as demurely as if she enjoyed her part. And the queerest was that so many of the colored people we met wished us "a merry Christmas," just as if they had known us all their lives. I like the negroes; there is a sunny whole-heartedness about them that is just perfect. When we went by a large sail close by the Barracks, a negro on board called out to Herbert, who had fallen behind us and was watching the boat, to know if he wanted a sail. Herbert would have gone in a minute if his mother had not been there.

If there were ever tired children we were, when we went home. I could hardly drag one foot after the other. As we turned down Hospital Street, a great bull-dog came across the street and barked at us. I hate bull-dogs, and wanted to cry, I was so scared. St. Augustine has more dogs and more roosters in it than any other city in America, so everybody says; if you don't believe it, come here and see for yourself; and the funniest is the way they crow all night. Hannah says — and every word Hannah says is as true as the Bible — that they crow every hour, and sometimes, she thinks, every five minutes of both day and night.

December 30.—I can never write in this journal every day, and, as to try is to fail, and to fail is to do wrong, it would be best for me not to attempt it. You see, as soon as we can in the morning, out we go, and we don't come home until dinner, then out we go again, home to tea, and out again. There is nothing here like the short, winter, Northern days; it's daylight until it's dark. I am going to write about to-day, though, for we have been in Mr. Atwood's garden, and have seen so many things that one ought and wants to remember.

"Where is Mr. Atwood's place?" Well, it's a little out of the heart of the city, but not far from the Maria Sanches; that's the Spanish name of a river that when it's high tide is a river, and when it's low tide is only a sort of sluggish marsh. It comes up into King's Street, and King's Street is the street that has some splendid things on. Mr. Atwood's is on another street, I don't know the name, but you go into a rustic gate and there are some pretty winding paths shadowed by orange, and lemon, and fig, and palm trees, with beautiful climbing roses everywhere, and flowers in full blossom; but these are not what you come to see. You are taken first in front of the house; it's a real old plantation house, with broad verandahs and no end to the windows opening down to them. You go to a garden bed at the side of the house, and the boy stops and says, "There!"

"Where?" Herbert asked, looking up into the sky.

The boy is about as big as Herbert, so he laughed and swung on his heels, and jamming his thumb down toward the ground, said, —

"Pine apples!"

"Where?" said Herbert again, looking up at the clouds.

"Down there, see!"

"Tell that to the marines." But down on his knees went Herbert, and I close by his side, near the spot to which the boy's thumb pointed.

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Trehorne. "See, Greta, there are pine-apples. Look there! There is one almost half grown."

By this time Herbert and I had found it, but it was about the last place in the world you would have looked for a growing pine-apple.

"Oh," said Herbert, "I thought they grew on a tree as high as the sky, and the monkey ran up the trees and dropped them down on fellows' heads to smash their brains in."

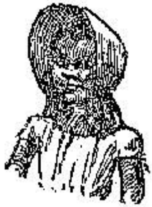
"Wouldn't have to fall far to smash yours, I should say, if that's all you know," said the boy, grinning. "Yes, sir, those are live pine-apples, and that's the way they grow."

The bushes were low, not over two or three feet in height, with a long, pointed, dagger-like looking leaf which spreads out, leaving in the centre, on the stem, a place for the pine-apple. The one we saw here was about as large as a good-sized coffee-cup, with its form perfect.

"It grew just that way, bigger and bigger every day until it was ripe," the boy said, "and it took a heap of time to ripen in."

The other bushes in the same bed had a variety of apples in every stage of growth, and there were also plenty of blossoms. The blossom was a large red flower, coarse for a flower, but rather delicate for so large a fruit blossom. There was one which had blighted and fallen off. I picked it up and Greta called to me as if she were half frightened out of her wits, —

"Why, Maggie!" but the boy said, "'Tain't no good, it won't have no apple," so I kept it, and here it is, pressed as preciously as if it were gold dust, though, come to think of it, I don't know as you ever press gold dust, but here it is, and won't Alice Hoar and Sue Benson open their eyes when they see it.



While we were looking at this, some gentlemen came and took the boy away, and when we were wondering what we should do, the funniest little negro girl came out of the house toward us. She was dressed as neat as a pink, and had big black eyes "and lips that went over into next week," Herbert said, but he always says queer things.

Mother speaks so gently to children they always smile back at her, and she seemed to know at once that this child had come to take the boy's place, and show us the garden. She said her name was Patience, and she was as bright as a button.

She took us to see guavas. Well, a guava was something we never have in our Northern market, though we do have guava jelly. Once, when I was sick, I wasn't in half as great hurry to get well, as if I hadn't had some of this jelly to eat, every time my throat was dry; the jelly comes in little round boxes, and is deep red. I never thought it was made of any fruit, but if I had, I should have expected to see a red kind; instead, here was a tree about as large as a small plum tree, with smallish serrated green leaves, and a fruit looking very much like a lemon, only not so pointed.

"Are these for sale, Patience?" mother asked.

"Yes, ma'am."

"And are they good to eat?"

"'Licious," said Patience, smacking her big lips.

"How do you sell them?"

"Two cents apiece."

"Take five," said Herbert, pulling out a ten-cent scrip. "Now show us how to eat them."

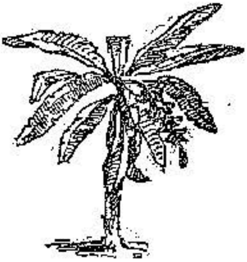
"Bite 'em wid your teeth," said Patience, grinning.

"Skin and all?"

"Yes, you like; some cuts 'em up, with sugar, for tea, some makes jelly, some makes 'serves—'serves very nice, so jelly, so raw. 'Licious!" biting into one, and catching the drops of juice that oozed out from between her black fingers.

Herbert took out his knife, and cut one up in dainty slices, then passed it round on the broad leaf of a lily, that made an elegant plate.

Well, all my spending money, for the rest of the time I am in St. Augustine, will go for guavas; I have settled that. We bought all we could carry around with us, then went to see banana trees. Oh, what big, curious things they are! Every year the whole top grows up from the root, and so it's sort of like a corn-stalk, and still not like one in the least. It has a great, coarse stem, and shoots way up, up, until it gets to be twenty feet high, sometimes, then out come long and narrow leaves, six and eight feet long, like a mammoth corn leaf—coarse-grained, too. Herbert said if Robinson Crusoe had only found some bananas on his island, it would have taken only a few to cover the roof of his hut. All this is curious enough, but when you come to the flower, and the fruit, you have a greater wonder still. The flower is a big, purple, maroon flower—a bud, it only opens in this way, one leaf loosens, curls over, purple outside, maroon in, with numberless little pistils; this drops off, and in its place comes a banana; then the buds grow longer, off falls another leaf, and on comes another banana, until you have the long stem, and the cluster of great, delicious fruit. They always pick these bunches green, and hang them up for weeks in the sun, to ripen. On this cluster of banana trees were several large bunches, and several buds. Mrs. Trehorne bought one of these buds, that had blighted so it could not bear fruit, and sent it home to a sick friend, by mail. We have all been so interested this evening, watching her put it up.



There 's Hannah. Now I shall hear, "Why, Maggie, how came you a-setting up this time of night? You oughter have been a-bed and asleep, two hours ago." She would send me to bed every night with the chickens, if she could. I am tired to death hearing her say, —

"Early to bed and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, and wealthy, and wise!"

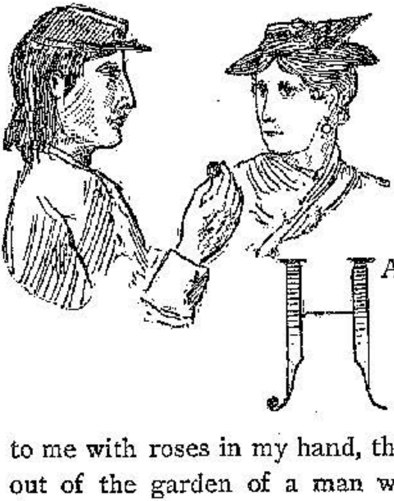
— beside, I am not a man. Herbert always parodies it with —

"Late to bed and late to rise,
Makes a girl sulky, and oh, how she cries"

I don't think he is much of a poet.

CHAPTER XI.

FORT MARION AND THE DUNGEON.



HAPPY New Year to everybody, here and at home! Never did I expect to have a New Year come to me with roses in my hand, that I have just picked out of the garden of a man who says he has four hundred different kinds, many of them in full bloom now. To go out to see this garden was to be our New Year's treat, but it is nothing but treats every day.

We were to walk out the mile and a quarter, and most of the way it was to be upon a shell road, When I first heard of the shell road, I supposed it was something very elegant, all bordered with shells laid out in patterns, like the fancy borders around the flower gardens in some of the handsome country seats near Boston; but what do you think it is? Nothing but old, broken-up, trodden-down hard oyster shells. They are firm and smooth though, and make an excellent road—but we went, all hands of us walking, but Stannie, and he was on Beauty. We went through the city gate—we always do whenever we can get an excuse for it—and by the Protestant cemetery. St. Augustine being a Roman Catholic city, no heretic is allowed to be buried within its precincts, so here they make the graves. It is a pleasant-looking cemetery, not well kept, but so green you like to stop and look over the fence, and wonder at the little wild flowers, blooming everywhere, and it is only the first of January.

Four hundred varieties of roses sound like a great many. "Reckon we're going to the garden of Eden," Herbert said to me as we walked briskly along; but it was just a common garden after all, with rows upon rows of rose bushes, about a foot or a foot and a half high, most of them with buds, some with full-blown flowers. It's a rose nursery, and the kinds are of the rarest, but they are all cut as soon as they open, and sent into the city for sale. The man who owns it was very kind to us. He seemed to take a great fancy to Stannie, followed round wherever he went, and filled his hands with the handsomest flowers there were left. The house belonging to the garden was a true Florida house. It had verandahs on all four sides of both stories, with long, low windows opening to them, and from three of the verandahs you had fine open views of the sea.

Herbert said he would "own that place if ever he lived to be a man," but then he is great on meaning to own everything in the world.

Who do you think Stanhope kept his finest rose for? why, our Hannah; there is a great friendship between them.

To-night we are to go out for a short sail. If we return in safety I will record it. I always feel as if we took our lives in our hands when we entrust ourselves to the treacherous sea.

Just before going to bed.—Had a splendiferous time. Philip hired the boat with the pretty carpet and the pleasant-looking negro, and we went out about two miles. The sun was just setting, and it seemed as if we were going right into an ocean of crimson and gold. I had to draw my hand along through the water, to be sure it was just white water and nothing more. We are to go to the North Beach soon, and spend the day. Hurrah for shells then! Hannah pops her head in and says,—

"What, not in bed yet, Margaret Ware! It's high time."

January 16.—Such a lark as we have had at the Fort to-day—but there now, I suppose the proper thing is to tell all the history of this oldest fort in America first, so here goes. I have asked Greta to let me copy it right out of her journal. "It was built more than two centuries ago in the form of a trapezium—" I had written so far when Greta said, why don't you write about it as you learned it, not make such a stiff record. Well then, Philip took his book that tells everything about St. Augustine, and off we went, mother, Hannah, Beauty and all. We tied Beauty to a post near the first drawbridge, and then clustered round Phil while he read, "It was built more than two centuries ago, in the form of a square or trapezium."

"Square, I know," said Stannie, "but what's that other, traps—something?"

"A trapezium," said Phil, keeping his eyes on his book, "is a plane figure contained under four right lines of which the opposite pairs are not parallel."

"I should call that a *very* plain figure, indeed," said Herbert gravely, and then we all laughed.

"In the salient angles of the bastions," went on Phil, "are four turrets or bartizans—"

"Very plain again," said Herbert.

"The moat is fortified—"

"That green place all round the high wall of the fort is the moat," interrupted Stannie, "a man told me so the other day, and when the fort was held they used to fill it with water that they let on from the San Sebastian River, so, with the bridges up, no one could reach even these steep walls without swimming over this deep moat."

"That's plain enough even for you, Herbert," said Phil; "thank you, Stannie. This moat is fortified by an internal barrier, and there is an outer wall which extends around the whole."

"Pretty plain for one thing," and Herbert gestured all around *at* the walls in such a ridiculous way, that we heard a queer sound as if some one was laughing way down at the bottom of his stomach. Turning round, we saw an Indian with a gun on his shoulders, who had come up softly behind us.

"He's a guard," said Herbert, then touching his cap he held his hand out toward the guard.

The Indian touched his cap in the same way and gave Herbert's hand a good gripe, if I can judge by the face he made up.

"There are traces to be found," went on Phil, "of the arbatis, scarp, counterscarp, and fraise —"

"Oh, come, Phil, that's too bad now; who cares a copper about your scarp, and your fraise? Mother, wont you tell him to stop, and let us go in?"

"Yes, let us go in, Phil. We shall learn all we can remember about it in a little time, I dare say," said Mrs. Trehorne, and I couldn't help catching up her hand and kissing it, I was so glad. Then we went over the first draw-bridge, and had almost crossed the second, the Indian sentinel smiling and nodding to us, as when we went, when I heard, —

"Hey?" then words way down in a throat, and then "Hey?" again, sharper than ever.

I turned round, and there was Hannah close by the Indian. He was holding something between his thumb and finger, for her to buy, and she was gesturing away at him, with her cotton gloves all spread apart, as if she was going to scratch him.

"Bodly! Podly! Sodly! Godly!" a black hand close in her face.

"Hey? No, I don't want it, I tell you. I don't care nothin' for your beans."

"Bodly! Podly! Sodly! Godly! Gee! Hee! See!"

"Hey? No, I tell ye, no. I won't give ye a cent for 't. Don't stick up five fingers at me. I haven't got no money to throw away on ye; *no*, NO," shaking her head as if she would shake it off.

"Hodly! Hee! Hee! Hee!"

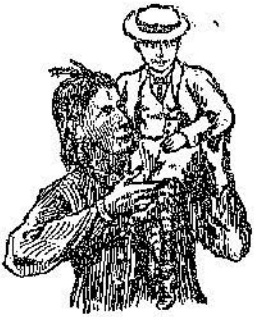
"Don't hee me! I tell you *no*, and when Hannah Gowan says no, she means no. Anybody but a red-skin would know that," she said, turning imploringly to my mother. "What on arth has he set on me so for. I don't want none of his truck."

"That's a very nice sea bean he offers you, though, Hannah," said my mother, laughing. "That is the way those poor fellows make a little money, and keep themselves from dying of homesickness; you must remember they are prisoners of war."

"And deserved to be, if half I hearn tell of them be true," said Hannah, without a bit of sympathy. "I don't want none of their beans, no way."

But mother's purse was out, and the bean hers, so the Indian looked happy, and we went on, through a big stone gate, under a long archway, where there were tables covered with photographs of the Indians and the fort, the Indians themselves sitting behind the tables, selling them.

Mother said it was the most wonderful thing she ever heard, that these Indians were brought here only six months before, naked, with the scalps of white men braided into their hair. Now, they all wore the United States uniform, and acted as if they were almost soldiers; but I was dreadfully afraid of them, and kept hold of mother all the time at first.



Stannie didn't seem to mind a bit, and what do you think, we hadn't been inside the fort a half-hour, when a young Indian, a good-looking fellow, almost handsome, took him up in his arms, and carried him. Stannie put his arm round the Indian's neck, and seemed to enjoy it; he talked away with signs, and both understood — they did really understand each other. Inside of the fort is a great round space; the walls are broken in, more or less, but still you have the form complete, and here are piled up old cannon, and great cannon balls, in heaps. Herbert and I tried to lift them, but we couldn't.

"I wonder, now," said Hannah, coming close up to my mother, and speaking in a low voice, "if there is another white person in this fort, beside us."

"I don't see one," said mother, looking quietly around, "but the fort is so large there might be a whole regiment of soldiers here, and we none the wiser."

This seemed to quiet Hannah for a moment; she dropped behind us, and went peering about as if she were hunting them up. Pretty soon she came again. "Mrs. Ware," she whispered, "I don't believe there is another white folk here, and these fellows look as if they could do e'eny most anything they had a mind to; it's dreadful."

"Why, Hannah, I do believe you are afraid," said mother, softly; "don't you want to go home?"

"And leave you all to be scalped alive? When Hannah Gowan does that, may she kitch it."

"There is really no danger," mother went on, decidedly. "See all there is to be seen, and enjoy it." But Hannah kept one eye on the way out, and followed us very reluctantly. "Let's go into the dungeon, now we are here, mother," said Herbert.

"Certainly, if the corporal comes to take us in," his mother answered, and I saw poor Hannah turn pale.

"That boy will be the death of us all," she muttered, as we began to look inside of some of the open doors.

"Here's a chapel," said Greta. "See, here are the niches where the Catholics used to put the vases of holy water."

"And here is where the Indians come to school now, and to chapel. See these blackboards. They are learning their letters fast, I hear, and some of them can repeat the Lord's Prayer. They even begin to sing hymns."

"Shouldn't you like to come and teach them, Greta?" mother asked.

"And you would too, I know, Phil," his mother added.

Both of the young people said they should, and perhaps they will; Greta is such a splendid Sabbath School teacher; she has such splendid Christmas trees!

There was an odd little window over the door, through which once an Indian prisoner climbed and escaped; it did not seem possible, but there's another window and another story that we shall come to by and by. Many of these rooms are built of solid masonry, under the broad walls. Oh dear, what an awful place to live in; yet here whole families have lived for years together!

When we had seen them all, where the Indians eat, and where their meals are cooked, a white man with uniform on came through the gateway.

"Bless the Lord," said Hannah, so fervently that we all laughed.

"Now for the dungeon," said Philip, "that 's the old corporal."

"Mrs. Ware!" said Hannah, catching hold of mother's sleeve, "be ye going to tempt Providence a-going into any dungeons, with these blood-thirsty savages lying in wait to destroy us, right out here?"

"I don't think there is the least danger, Hannah," mother answered, "but you need not go unless you wish; you would be perfectly safe here."

"The land a' macy!" said Hannah. "Do you think I would be left here alone a minute?"

"Why, Hannah, I never saw you so foolish before. If you really are afraid, I will go home with you and the others may go on."

"When I make a fool of myself," said Hannah tartly, drawing herself up, "you will know it, I guess, Mrs. Ware; no, go on; if we die we will all die together!"

Mother just laughed, and then Phil came back with the old corporal, who touched his cap and said "of course we could go in if we wished to."

"You go in every day?" Mrs. Trehorne asked.

"Twenty times a day," he said. Then he pushed open a big door all covered with iron bolts and bars, and we went into one of the large vaulted rooms.

He shut the door behind us and fastened it; I saw Hannah watch him as he did so.

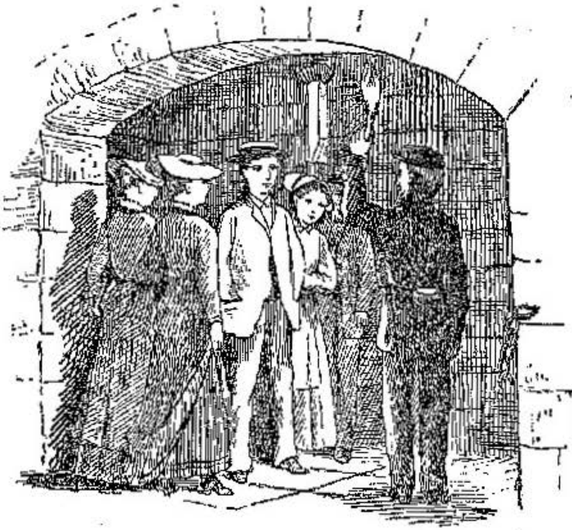
Then he took down two torches from a sort of shelf, and lighted them.

"This dungeon," he said, "is the most remarkable one in America. Part of it has only recently been discovered, and when the last room was found it contained two skeletons. Some iron chains were round them. These unfortunate people had been shut in alive, walled in, and that is all that is known about them."

"How dreadful," said Greta, shuddering.

I took hold of my mother's hand. I love my mother dearly, and always like to be near her whenever we go anywhere. The old corporal took a torch in each hand, and said in a sepulchral voice, "Come!" So we went in through a long, narrow, dark passage, which made me wish I hadn't come, because of the skeletons, you know! Hannah ran back, then she ran to us again, and I never did see her act so in all my life.

"Not the least danger in the world, madam," said the corporal. I think it was the corporal's being so respectful that gave Hannah courage, for she came right along. Then we went into another room, where daylight never entered. What an awful thing a dungeon is! So we all said, and were turning to come out when the man said in that deep voice, "Not yet." It sounded as if he said, "You 're lost," and I would have given anything if I never had gone in there. Herbert called out, —



"Why now, this is jolly!" just as if he really enjoyed it. I don't see what boys are made of.

The corporal stooped down and put his torch through a hole close by the ground, then he crawled through it, and said "Come!" and through popped Herbert and Stannie without waiting a second, then Greta went and then mother. I meant to be the last, but Hannah drew herself up against the side of the wall, and when I crept down just to see where they had gone, there she stood, shaking her head as if she would shake it off.

I went in, for it was only a big room, and the corporal was showing them just where the skeletons were found, and of course that's history, and my father wishes me to be accurate.

I heard something about that same Mrs. Radcliffe again. I must ask Greta who and what she was. When we went out of this room there was no Hannah to be seen.

"Why, where *is* Hannah?" mother asked, as if she were really frightened.

"Gone out, ma'am, I suppose," said the corporal, grinning; "she seemed well scared, most people are, but you see there is absolutely nothing to be afraid of.'

"Nothing," said we all together, but we went out as quickly as we could.

When we came to the first room we had entered, there sat Hannah, pale enough, but trying to look as if she didn't care a bit.

"Are you ready to go home?" mother asked.

"There's Stanhope," said Hannah, without answering directly, "if you think the air of sich close holes is good for him, or Greta either, I don't see no use in coming to Floridy, for one."

"Well, Hannah, we will go where the air is better," said mother, smiling.

"Poor, dear Hannah," said Greta, "I never saw *you* scared before; I am glad to find you human."

"Human!" echoed Hannah, "*in*human, I should call it." Then we went out from under the walls, and if ever people were glad to do so, we were — at least, *I* was. Herbert declared it was "the jolliest thing he had seen in Florida," and I heard Phil say to the corporal, —

"I must have another look at this, while I am here."

"Nothing would tempt me in there again — way down into the bowels of the earth," Mrs. Trehorne said, "it is horrible."

Then we went up on the walls, and here it was very cheerful. You go up over a broken stone stairway, and then you come upon a broad stone parapet, which is almost like a town by itself. We were very lucky to-night, for Captain P. was just coming, and the Indians were to be assembled for roll-call. We had only time to look into the long barrack-room, where they sleep, when we saw them begin to gather. Oh, such awful-looking men as they are! One of them sounded the bugle call, and then they ranged themselves along in a row, standing stiff and stark, just as soldiers do. If an arm or a foot was out of place, the corporal would hit it a knock, and wait until it was fixed just like the others.

When they were all arranged, the captain went in front of them, and began, —

"White Horse!"

"Ugh."

"Deer Killer!"

"Ugh."

"Bald Eagle!"

"Ugh."

"Buffalo Hunt!"

"Ugh."

"Roman Nose!"

"Ugh."

"Rising Bull!"

"Ugh."

"Big Moccasin!"

"Ugh."

"Medicine Water!"

"Ugh!"

"Soaring Eagle!"

"Ugh."

"Come See Him!"

"Ugh."

There were ever so many other names, out of which we could not make any sense. When this was over, the Indians moved to the door of their barracks "in rank and file," Herbert called it, and we ran round the fort. There is one big tower, from the top of which vessels can be seen way out at sea. Herbert ran up a sort of ladder just by it, like a squirrel, and, if there had been no one to see me, I could have gone up quite as quickly; but now, I just had to stand under it, and ask him to pick me a bit of a green thing, which was growing out of one of the stones, at its very top. It is this little bit of a yellow flower; I sew it on here, so I needn't forget where it comes from.

Hannah was in such a hurry to go home, that she kept us all in a fidget, when it began to grow a little dusk. She kept pulling Greta's shawl up over her shoulders, and saying, with a sidewise look at mother, —

"I thought the doctor said it wasn't any way to git well, to be out after dew fell;" or, "It's gitting so damp that you'll have to change every rag you have on, as soon as you git home. I niver see, niver!"

When we reached home, she made up such a light wood fire in the parlor that, if it hadn't been so cheerful, it would have roasted us. But these light wood fires are just elegant — we enjoy them so much.

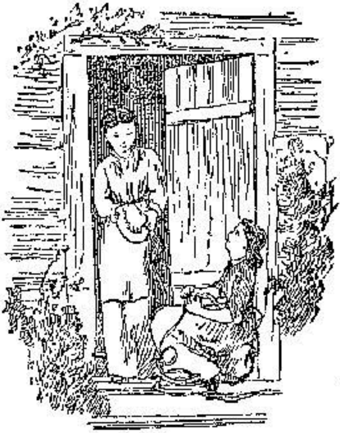
A few things were settled at the fort this afternoon. Herbert and I are to go, on Wednesday afternoon, and take archery lessons of the Indians. Was there ever anything so nice? Stannie is to go too on Beauty, and ride about wherever he pleases, which is a delight to him. He is the dearest boy in the world; I had no idea a boy could be so perfect, and he is gaining in health every day. Both of our invalids are getting well, so there is nothing to prevent our having a grand good time.

CHAPTER XII.

CHARLIE AND JUAN ACT AS SHOW-MEN.

THERE has been something new every day. This morning we went to see palmetto hats braided. There are a great many people here wholly supported by this straw-braiding; but first, about the palmettos. Once I remember going with my father to a large green-house, and seeing a palmetto growing. I thought it was a wonderful thing, the leaf was so large, and such a deep green; but here they grow everywhere. You see the hedges with Spanish bayonet, which is a kind of palmetto, in them, and then there is a tall palmetto, that grows twenty feet high sometimes, out of the stalks of which canes are made, with leaves large enough to cover you all up if you wanted to take a nap; and a short palmetto, from one to three feet high, which grows abundantly a little out of St. Augustine. The leaves are fan-shaped. I think it is the same thing from which the palm-fans are made that you see in all the stores. This is beautiful, used to ornament rooms as long as it is is fresh, but it withers very soon. I keep my room trimmed with it, much to Hannah's disgust, who can't see what I "want sich trash 'round for."

When we were walking on the sea wall, the other day, we looked down into the water, and there were quantities of these fans all spread out. Herbert and I were wondering if they were put there just to look prettily when a lady said, and everybody here is good to tell you everything you want to know, "that they were put in to bleach for hat-braiding." So I suppose these big leaves are bleached, and then they are shreded in some way, and then comes the braiding for the hats. The girls here just braid without look-



ing at their fingers, as Hannah knits, and they walk round with their work in their hands, talk and laugh, and don't seem to mind what they are doing, in the least.

There is no end to the variety of patterns and shapes of hats that are made. The straw is woven in long pieces, then sewed like any other straw. You will see them piecing ends together, looking you full in the face and talking at the same time. We all had new hats made. This one we ordered to-day is my fourth, and I am going to carry presents of them to the girls at home. A funny thing happened. Mother says it is the best Western anecdote she has heard for some time.

When Herbert was in one of the shops, having his head measured for a hat, two gentlemen came in and examined the hats. They talked together about them, and at length one turned to the woman who kept the store, and asked,—

"How much are your hats?"

"Different prices. What kind do you want?"

"Oh, I don't want any one kind. What will you take for the lot?"

"Oh, sir, I have over fifty made."

"That all? Why, I know more young ladies than that in Chicago, that I shall like to give one to. I want about fifty more for my married friends. Come, now, what will you take for getting me up the job lot, and having them ready by ten to-morrow morning?"

Herbert said it was so ridiculous to see that woman's look of amazement, but she named her price, and the man said,—

"Agreed, have them ready now, punctual—to a moment," and went out of the shop, as unconcerned as if he had bought a stick of candy.

Mrs. Trehorne thought they were making fun of the woman, and would never come back; but Herbert insists they were in sober earnest, for he heard them talking over the names of the ladies they wanted to take the bonnets to.

Next day.—How queer things do happen! I had hardly put up my pen and gone down into the parlor, before two gentlemen called on Mrs. Trehorne, and they were the very two who had bought the hats.

Yes, it was a true story. They were gentlemen Mrs. Trehorne had known in New York, and they had run down to Florida for a little rest. They told her a great many lady friends had said to them when they came away, "Bring me a Florida hat;" so they thought they might as well gratify them. These hats retail at from a dollar and a half to four dollars apiece, and the purchase was quite a lucky thing for the Spanish woman who sold them.

So many of the inhabitants are Spaniards here. Everywhere you see the large dark eyes, olive complexions, and oval faces of these people. Then there are others, Minorcans, but I will tell you about them when I write of Juan Lopez, the boy Herbert has picked up. Now, I must stick to my hats.

They dye the straw black, then weave black and white hats, which are very pretty.

Jan. 29.—I'll put this in here because it belongs to the hats; yet there is the orange grove at Dr. Anderson's, and the big, *big* water-willow, and the —but no matter, one thing at a time. Now, the grasses!

In all the stores in St. Augustine, you see large bunches of dried grasses tied up for sale, so mother said, when I wanted to fill the house with them,—

"No, it isn't at all worth while; you children have nothing else to do. Go into the country and pick them." So to-day, after breakfast, Stanhope said Juan Lopez was coming round to show us where the grasses were. While he was telling us, we looked down from the piazza, and there, right under us, was Juan eating an orange. The boys here eat an orange by biting it, just as we do an apple. Sometimes they spit out the skin, but oftener they swallow it all. He had one with the juice running down between his fingers; he just grinned when he saw us, and Stannie tossed him down a big bit of jelly cake, which he caught like a monkey and grinned all the more.

"Where's Charlie?" asked Stannie.

"He 's here," jerking his shoulder out back of him.

"Charlie!" called Stanhope, and a black boy, with a bright face, came kicking up his heels from behind the corner.

"How are you, Charlie?" said Herbert.

"How are you?" said Charlie. "Going for to go down dare?"

"Down where?"

"A-getting grasses; know whare dare lots!"

"Yas," drawled Juan, "lots, tip-tops!"

"How far?"

"Oh, two or tree steps; 'tain't many down dare. He 'll take the pony, won't he?" nodding at Stannie.

"Yes, hurrah, here 's a go! I say, Phil," shouted Stannie, "I want Beauty in just two seconds and a half."

Both boys laughed. "Me get 'um," said Charlie.

"You!" answered Phil, coming to the balcony "Who are you?"

"Charlie!"

"Charlie who?"

"Only just Charlie."

"Well, Charlie, can I trust you?"

"Yes," said Herbert, "you can; I know the fellow, I have bought oranges of him many a time. Come, I 'll go with you, and we will be here in less than a jiffy."

Mother wondered about my going with so many boys, but I promised her to be very discreet, and Mrs. Trehorne said she should feel so much safer about Stannie if I was with them.

Mother said something to me in private before I went, which I don't care to write down. I had rather mention how good Hannah was, and how she met us at the door with a basket of lunch — a flat basket that can be strapped on to Beauty's back, so there is no need of any one's carrying it. We went right out through King's street, over the causeway and the red bridge, and only stopped on it long enough to watch a man fishing; he seemed to catch a fish every time he put his line in, and if we had brought our lines I am afraid there wouldn't have been any grass gathering to-day.

We turned off the main road not far from the depot, and fell into a path, that we should call, at the North, a cart path. Juan called it a ro*ad*, with the emphasis on the last syllable. They do drag out their words so here.

So many, many palmettos, there never need be an end to the sale of palmetto hats in Florida! We walked, and we walked, and though we saw ever so many grasses, the boys just laughed every time we wanted to pick one, until we came to a spot where it was wet, and only a few tall, bare pine trees to cover the ground, and there they were. Won't you just look into our rooms if you want to know what we found. Here is the tall, fine grass, with thousands of delicate little buds and slim leaves shaking like dewdrops, only they don't glitter; they merely quiver. Then there is another kind in bunches. This they use so much for trimming on the Florida hats. The bunches are almost like knots, lover's knots tied of the most delicate grass fibre. Purple grass, too, myriads of bits of purple balls dancing away as if each one had a separate life of its own; but I can't begin to tell you all about them, I just wish you could see how trimmed up our house is. When we came home, we looked like a prairie — "a walking prairie," Herbert said.

When we had a high pile, Charlie said, "Now, let's go to the founting and have a drink. Ponk Lee founting — down dar!"

"The fellow means Ponce de Leon's fountain," Herbert said. "Are we near that?"

"Just down dare," and Charlie's wonderful thumb went flying around to the west. The boys talk with their fingers down here.

We went there as fast as we could. We children said we meant to drink of the water and be always young, but after all, I guess I should like to be a little older, just a little, you know, about as old as Greta, and then, perhaps — but no matter; this wonderful fountain was close by a small, brown house, out of which ran a queer little girl, when she saw us, with a tumbler in her hand.

"Dat 's for a drink," said Charlie, tumbling over on to his head and kicking his feet in the air. It's a trick he has. I should think he had done that same thing twenty times to-day, since we started.

"Hullo, Charlie," said the little girl.

"Hullo," said Charlie, coming back on to his feet.

"Want a drink?"

"Want a drink!" repeated he, putting his bare feet wide apart and nodding toward us.

"Of course we do," said Herbert; "hold on, let's have our lunch."

Then Juan and Charlie ran away as fast as they could go; I don't know what for, but Stannie said they were afraid they would have to eat too.

Herbert didn't say a word to them, though I kept teasing him to call them back until we had the lunch all spread out on palmetto leaves, then he said, —

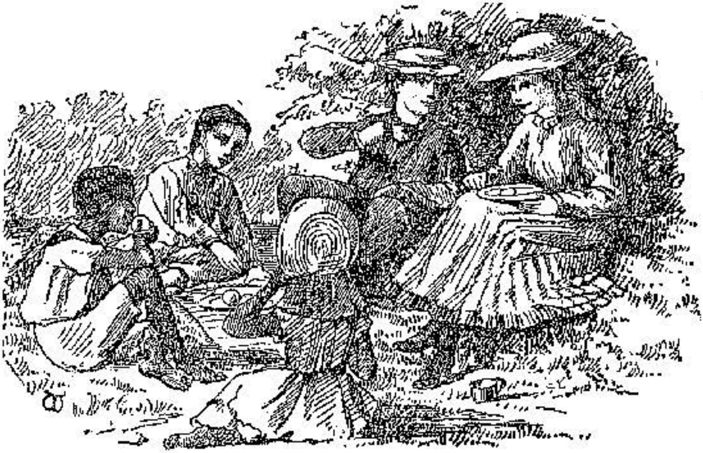
"You fellars, come back here; here 's some grub."

They hung their heads and began kicking the ground, but didn't stir.

"You, Charlie! you, Juan! and you, little girl; I don't know her name," — looking at me — "come back here and have a bite! Here, Juan, here is a cake; there 's ten times more than we can eat. Take hold now, and let 's see you show your teeth, Charlie. Grub 's what they were made for!"

Juan sidled up and caught a cake Stannie threw at him, then Charlie caught another; but I carried one as politely as I could to the little girl, and, in a minute, we were all sitting down and eating together as if we had known each other all our lives. Beauty was in the middle, and she had many a good bite, I can tell you.

I must say for Hannah Gowan, that she is the best hand to put up a luncheon I ever saw; she didn't even forget the salt, and there was a whole boiled chicken.



We promised the mothers we would come home in good season; so, though we wanted to stay ever so much longer, we did come back long before dark; and I think this was the pleasantest day I ever spent in my life.

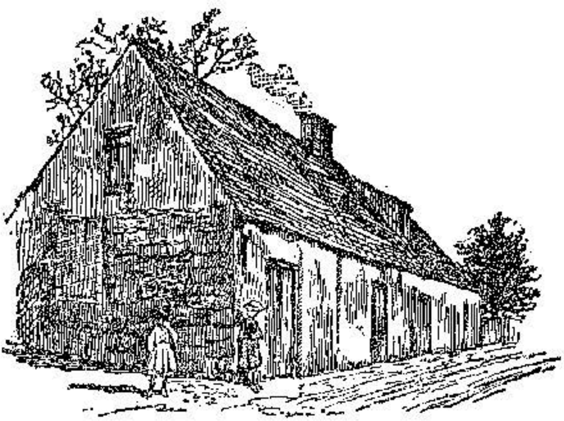
Mrs. Trehorne said I must have taken excellent care of Stanhope, for he was not over-tired, and Charlie only showed us the soles of his feet ten times coming home. I think *he* must have been very tired, or he would have done so oftener.

Juan is a nice boy; quite a gentleman. Herbert says he likes him better than any other fellow here, and he means to cultivate him. I hope he won't too much, for if he does, my mother won't let me go with them, for where Juan is, there also are Charlie and Charlie's feet! We are to go bird-trapping and alligator-catching, — that is, the boys are; but I don't know about myself. When I asked mother, she said, —

"Why, Maggie, I shall have to make a pair of pants for you;" but she smiled the kind of smile that don't mean no, so I shall hope to the end.

Jan. 30. — Something dreadful has happened; Charlie has broken his leg! Juan came round this morning to tell us. Charlie went out to the woods where he was trapping some red-birds for me, and fell off from a tree. Juan tried to get him home, but couldn't, so he went for Uncle Joe, who "toted" him all the way to the road in his arms, and then they got a "chance at a cart" for him. Doctor had been in to set the limb, but Juan says "he groans awful."

Night. — Mother has been round to see Charlie and take him some nice things; she always does take nice things when anybody is sick. She says she found him in a negro house in Africa, as comfortable as anybody could desire. The house is a story and a half high, with a little flower garden at one end. Mother says it is really wonderful how much these colored people have done for themselves since they were freed. Many of them have not only bought the land and paid for it, but have actually put up these houses and paid for them too. Africa is quite a settlement by itself. Charlie's grandmother takes in washing, through the season of visitors, and as she does it nicely, she has all the work she wants. One dollar a dozen mounts up, and she has a little money, she told my mother, "laid up for a rainy day." Charlie's mother lives in Savannah, and has married again, so this boy has been given to his grandmother.



"He was allers breaking his legs or a-doing sumping," she said, looking askance at the boy; "the only wonder is that his neck has stood it as long as it has; it wouldn't if it hadn't been strung on wires. I've brought up six boys of my own, but never saw the likes of this one afore; I do' know but he'll be the death of me yet; 'pears like it."

Charlie had his jacket on, "all dressed in state," mother said, to receive his callers, and a constant string of them she thought there must have been; ten came to inquire for him while she sat there.

We all laughed when she said Charlie was pale, but she says there is as much difference in the looks of a colored person as of a white one, when he is sick.

We asked her a hundred questions about everything, but they all ended in permission for Greta to go this afternoon with Stannie to see how things go on.

I half cried to think I wasn't the one to be sent. I do so love to be mother's messenger to the sick, but she said, "by and by, when there was less danger of a fever setting in."

Just before going to bed.—It seems Charlie is the ne'er-do-well of St. Augustine. It is strange how many stories we hear about him, now: how he stole Dr. Anderson's oranges and walked to Tacoi, where he peddled them off for a small sum; how he ties dogs' tails together, and sets all the roosters he can put his hands on, fighting; how he was the boy that ran away with Beauty, when he ran away with me; how he steals oysters, and pea-nuts, and every thing he can find; and how he lies.

"He's a magnificent liar," Herbert says; "it's equal to a chapter from Baron Munchausen's life, to hear what that fellow has said and done." Well, the long and the short of it is, that everybody in St. Augustine knows Charlie, and, in spite of his roguishness, everybody is sorry to hear of his accident. Mother says roguishness is not the right word. It is not roguish to lie and steal, but wicked.

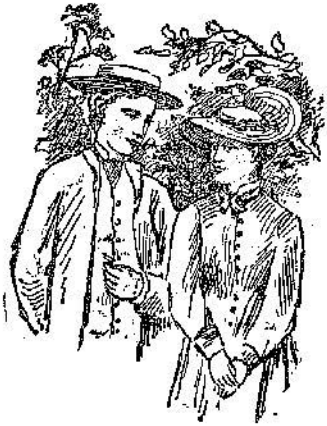
Poor Charlie; I should like to see even the sole of his dirty foot in the air, now; he is so good-natured, happy, and obliging

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SAIL TO ANASTASIA ISLAND.

HOW the winter is flying Every day we are invited out to something; but the mothers don't often think it best for us to go. They have let us join a party, however, that goes to-morrow to the North Beach, and I will save the room to tell of our good time. I will only put in here a few words about Dr. Anderson's orange grove. This is on King's Street, and is just the most splendid place in the whole of St. Augustine. It has "a large frontage" — that 's what Phil calls it — on the street, and a hedge made of rose bushes — Spanish dagger and palmettos, of course. Outside this hedge is a row of magnificent water oaks, which bend 'way over the street to meet the pride of China trees on the other side. It is such a lovely arch, we were never tired of looking through it; if you try to walk, the sand is so deep that it isn't any fun at all. You may enter the grounds by the drive-way, and this drive-way isn't much like those we have at the North. There are, to begin with, ever so many tall oleander trees — real big trees! not your shrubs that grow in a big green box, but trees as tall as horse-chestnuts. Then come lemon and orange trees, and rose bushes; oh, such rose bushes, and such roses! This drive-way leads you to a large coquino house, with a verandah, of course; and the climbing plants, the honeysuckles, and jessamines, and more other things than I can name, are worth coming to Florida to see! But it 's the oranges and the lemons here! They grow in long avenues, and were loaded down with their beautiful fruit the first time we went into the grounds. There were great piles of the fruit on the green grass, heaped up as we heap apples in an orchard at home. We just walked in and out among these trees, with our eyes and mouths wide open, — it was hard to tell which were open the widest, — and Herbert kept frightening me by threatening, now to pick an orange off from the tree, and now to pocket one from the golden heaps.

When he got me so excited that I was almost crying, he would put it down and go off about his business, as coolly as if nothing had happened. We walked, and walked, and walked over this grove, and I don't know but we should have been walking there now, if some one hadn't proposed that we go to "the lovers' walk." Only think of having a live lovers' walk, right on your own grounds! Wasn't it funny Phil and Greta went to find it alone together? They did look so pretty, and so happy, as they walked down the lane together. And they did't call us for ever so long. I looked with all my eyes to see if anything had happened, when they came back, but Greta's cheeks were no redder than they were when she went away, and Phil didn't look in the least as he ought; then we went where they told us to go, and we found what Herbert pshawed at; he said he could show a dozen prettier lovers' walks in the Central Park. I thought it was real pretty. A narrow path ran in between some trees that were covered with the gray moss, and there were wooden benches put in the very spots where they — the lovers, I mean — would like to rest.



When we came back mother was standing by a fence, waiting to show us some olive trees,—the trees that olive oil is made from, and olives that we eat, grow on,—such large trees, with delicate, long, slender leaves of that soft olive green we like so much in worsteds. These were covered with this same moss, which seems to be killing them, for there were long, bare limbs without a sign of life. I don't know whether olives were growing on them now or not, for there was a high fence which we could not climb over. Herbert wanted to, but his mother said she was ashamed of him. "When people throw open their grounds to the public in the generous way Mrs. Anderson has, visitors should respect every inch of the ground." Once when I stooped down to pluck a flower, which was growing well out on the lawn, my mother stopped me, too, with:

"Don't touch, Maggie, not even a blade of grass, without permission," and I heard Herbert giggling. I suppose it was because I had been scolding him so constantly for thieving,—that's a hard word. Well, for pretending to take when he doesn't mean to.

We had heard the orange wood was very tough, and that was the reason the trees would bear such loads of the large fruit, but we couldn't believe it until we tried,—which we did on an orange tree in our yard. I only put this in here because I want to write now that some of these trees in Mrs. Anderson's grove had two thousand five hundred oranges on them, and from one thousand three hundred up was very common. There were thousands—I believe eighty thousand—of orange trees in this one grove, so you may see a little what it means to be in St. Augustine with the oranges. I haven't said a word about the lemons. The lemon tree is very like the orange tree, and the lemons growing here are so large that you would not believe me if I told you. Some of them would hardly go into a pint bowl. There are, too, a variety of oranges. There is the Mandarin orange, which is very sweet, pares easily, and has a flavor of spices. This is rare and considered one of the best kind. Then there is a seedless orange, which is also much sought after, and brings a high market price. You would laugh to see how well the bearing quality of each tree is known, just as our farmer knows about his apple trees. Oh, I came near forgetting to write about a tree which was loaded with oranges and lemons together! "Grafted," mother said. Under this tree Abraham Lincoln came and barked at us. He is a little fat black and tan terrier, and don't like boys. He snapped at Stannie, and that I never saw a dog do before. Then there is the packing house. Oh dear, the more I write about the more I verily believe there is to say. You see we missed Herbert, but we were always missing him wherever we went, so it didn't much matter, only I was afraid of the pockets and the oranges, and had to keep hunting for him, until I saw him, beckoning with all his might in the door of a sort of out-house. When I went there what should I find but Master Herbert seated on the floor, in a room half full of oranges. This was the sorting-room. After the oranges are gathered they are put on the floor here, and left for a few days to sweat before packing; then each one is wiped, and carefully rolled in a bit of clean paper. Herbert was rolling away as if that was his home, and he had been trained to it. At first I was shocked, but I never can tell how such things happen — they just are. I was sitting down beside him, rolling too, and when the mothers came there we were. There was the best-natured negro there, who seemed to have the care of things, and when my mother asked him if we troubled him, he said: "No, no; dat dare new work for 'em; p'r'aps if dey had more dey wouldn't like it quite so well — my boys don't."

I don't see how any children could ever be tired of handling these beautiful things. I could have sat there and packed all the rest of the day, if Herbert would have stayed too, but mother bought a quantity of oranges here, and I think Herbert wanted to get home to eat them. He said he never knew how to feel for Eve before, about that apple, you know, in the Garden of Eden; that if it looked half as tempting as some of the fruit he had seen that morning, he thought she ought to have had me along, to be kept from tasting not, touching not, handling not. Well, I must say I never came so near breaking the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." But I did keep it. I didn't bring away even a blade of grass, and I was well paid for my trials, for just as we were leaving, — they had all gone but Stannie and I, and we were close up by the verandah, looking at a rare flower which grows there, for Stanhope does love flowers, though he never steals one, — a dear, good, kind lady came out of the house and saw us. At first I felt that we must run away as fast as we could, and I took hold of Stannie's hand to help him, but instead of moving he just looked up in the lady's face, and asked :—

"Will you please tell me what this is, ma'am?"

Then she smiled and told him, and came down off from the verandah, and picked our hands full of flowers for us, then gave us two big oranges apiece, and asked us to come again when her roses were in blossom. What do you think of that? The others had waited for us under one of the big trees by the gate, and weren't we proud when we showed them what we had.

When we came away Stannie put up his lips to kiss the lady good-by, and I wanted to, but then he is so much smaller than I am, and sick besides. The lady asked him if he were sick, and said so kindly that she hoped the climate would make him well; but everybody is kind to Stannie, and I don't see how they can help it.

Herbert made up faces when we came, and said, "poh," the oranges were sour, he knew; but Phil said, "Sour grapes, Herbert."

We saw — but I won't tell you about anything more we saw to-day; they will all be mixed up together. Now I am going to get my boating dress ready for to-morrow, and see that everything is in order. We go at nine in the morning, and don't come home before night. Won't that be a jolly long time?

The day after our sail.—"You, Maggie; I'm so sorry for you. We had a splendid time. How could you have gone and slept over so?"

These were the first words I heard, and when I opened my eyes it was almost dark, and it took me ever so long to know what it meant. Then I heard Herbert laughing in through my key-hole, and I knew. He and I were going out before the others, to buy a surprise, —he is such a boy for surprises, —and the way I scrambled into my clothes so as not to lose a second! I don't see why he always wakes up and I always sleep over, but we do.

We were all going, Hannah and all. Now Hannah always plagues us, but in spite of that we never feel like leaving her at home, and then there's the lunch that she takes the whole care of.

We had the Idalia. It is a medium-sized boat, but it is commanded by a young man who has won two prizes with her, and who is just the best sailor, and

Phil says the best fellow, in the port. You go down some stairs to go on board your boat, and there was a big woman coming down over them at the same time I did.

"Oh dear!" she screamed; "little girl [I am *not* a little girl], won't you please stop until I am over? I am afraid two of us at once will *break down the steps?*" I just stopped and laughed, and so did Phil. He is so gentlemanly that he don't often laugh when he shouldn't, but he laughed now heartily, and the woman looked from one to the other of us, as if she wondered what did amuse us.

Herbert had asked Juan Lopez to come. He is never happy unless he has a half dozen boys with him, and now Charlie's leg is broken, he plead for Juan; he said that it was so lonely, and that Juan would be handy to help carry the things; he 's such a little fellow that he don't take up any room, and he seems to enjoy everything that 's going on. We had a nice breeze, and off we went like a bird, our captain turning and twisting us about in any way he fancied.

"Dear me," I said to Hannah, when the boat made a sudden tip, "suppose we should all be drowned?"

Now Hannah had been holding on to the side of the boat with both hands, as if she could hold it up out of the water, but I didn't know as she was really scared until she said, —

"Margaret Ware! you had better be about some other business than a-tempting Providence that way. It's no laughing matter to be upset, I can tell you. There ain't any danger now, be there?" — to the captain.

"No, ma'am," with a great deal of respect, "I hope not."

"*Hope* not," sharply; "don't you know?"

"I don't anticipate any; it's a little flawy, but nothing serious."

"Flawy?" echoed Hannah, turning pale.

"The wind don't haul round just as I thought it would," went on our captain with a smile; "it's setting right for flaws, but I don't think they will hurt us."

"Man!" and Hannah caught hold of mother as she spoke, "have you brought us all out here to drown us?"

"No, ma'am, I hope not."

"Hope not, *hope* not; hain't you got anything more sartin than that to say?"

"Oh, Hannah," said mother, "be quiet; there is no possible danger. See here, the boat moves as quietly as if it were on a pond."

"But he says it's flawy."

"Well, what if it is?"

"Miss Ware, if you're a-willing to venture — "

"Come now, Hannah," said Greta, "be still, or we will put you off on the first point of land we come to. I never knew you were such a coward before."

"I ain't no more a coward than any other sane woman, on land," said Hannah, looking a little ashamed of herself, "but it's wet out here."

At this everybody laughed, and just then the boat gave a serious lurch, which covered some of us with spray.

"I shall have to tack considerable to make land," said our Captain. "I didn't reckon on this change in the wind; it don't often blow so at this hour of the morning."

"You know best," said Phil, "only the sooner we are over, the longer time on shore."

"And to gather shells," I said. Now, I had brought no end of baskets to pick these same shells in, but I knew enough about "tacking" to remember that often it took a good share of the day, if the wind proved obstinate, so I thought less of the sail and more of the shells, as we seemed to go hither and thither, making in the end very little real progress.

"I'll run you on to Anastasia Island and take the beach last," said our captain at length; "perhaps the wind will change by that time." So he set his sail for the island, and drove the boat up against the shore as far as her keel would go. But here our first trouble began. We could not get near enough to clear the water, even with the help of a long board which seemed to have been thrown down to keep the feet dry. It fell just short, so it was necessary to catch the receding wave. This we young people did easily. Phil took Stannie on his back, then jumped my mother over safely, but splashed his own in, plump up to her knees. After this, it was no use to ask Hannah to land. She took hold of the side of the boat, and put her lips close together with a very decided "*no*" every time she was asked. There was nothing for it but to go on our way without her.

Here were shells in such abundance! You just had to stoop down and scrape them up by the quart. To be sure they were not all the nicest, or the most beautiful, but the tiny ones "were miracles of beauty," I heard Greta call them, as she put one pink, like her pretty palm, inside of it, and turned it over for Phil to see. I wondered he didn't kiss the hand. I am sure he would have done so in a story book.

Then we went to the coquino quarry. Now these coquino banks are just nothing but shells held together with sand, and when you chipped out pieces they all crumbled up in your hands; but when the blocks are taken out and exposed to the air, they become hard as stone. Herbert and I knocked out the biggest pieces we could, and hid them to see how they would be the next time we came. Then we had the two light-houses to see: the old one, which is just a big old coquino house, with a tall tower, and the new one where the light is kept now. It was quite a walk to reach this, and Herbert called out all the time we were running along the narrow path, "Look out for snakes! Big rattlesnakes here, and boa constricta swallow you up at a mouthful!" If there is any one thing I am more afraid of than another, it is a snake, and a rattlesnake beyond everything.

When Juan called out "Ky! Ky! Ky!" so suddenly, I jumped; I thought he had found the snake, but it was only a rabbit he had started and wanted Herbert to see. He says it's grand gunning over here; that gentlemen come every day and go back with their bags full. Phil said he would try it some time; but I thought his mother looked as if she would rather not have him.

When we reached the light-house, we found a very nice house, where the keeper lived; the tower with the barber's pole was funny enough. We went up two hundred stairs, and there was the lantern and the view! We had heard often of this view, how you could see St. Augustine and 'way out to sea.

Herbert said he didn't care a copper for St. Augustine, he saw enough of that every day; but the sea, that was worth coming for; though such a shipless sea he never could have imagined. He is used to the harbor of New York, with all its vessels, so no wonder this looked empty. Stannie rode up to the very tip-top on Phil's back. Phil says he is Beauty's brother, and when Stannie can't have the one he is to have the other.

When we came down from the light-house, we were so hungry that Phil went after Hannah and the baskets; he said the tide was out a little more and she could land with ease. While he was gone, Herbert and I ran round to look up a pretty place to eat in. We found a lovely shade where we could sit and look out to sea, so we spread our shawls and made a big tramping to scare away the snakes before we sat down. Pretty soon Phil came with Hannah; she brought a pair of dry stockings and shoes for Mrs. Trehorne. It was "only having these in her possession," Phil said, "that gave her the courage to land." Of course we had one of the nicest of lunches, and if ever a boy was hungry it was Juan Lopez; now he is at home with us, "he is as merry as a lark," — that's what Greta says.

While we were eating our lunch, Mrs. Trehorne told us a most beautiful story about a strong, kind man, who went one day to see a very fine mountain view. There was a rough road leading to the top of the mountain, and then a high tower, from the summit of which you could look miles upon miles over a beautiful country. When the man came down from the tower, he saw a woman helping a poor, pale invalid out of a wagon in which he had been brought up. He was paralytic, and had lost entirely the use of his lower limbs. When he reached the foot of the tower, he threw himself down, very much exhausted, to rest; and when he closed his eyes, the gentleman said, he was so pale he looked as if he was dead. After a little rest, he drew himself up on his elbow and said,—

"I have been longing for this for ten years; it is all and more than I hoped for."

Then they talked together, and the gentleman asked,—

"Would you like to go up into the tower? The view is far finer."

"Indeed I should," the sick man said, his face brightening, "but," touching his helpless limbs, "that is a thing I shall never do in this world."

"Yes, you can! I will carry you up if you will trust me; I am very strong."

He did trust him, and the poor sick man's gratitude no words could express.

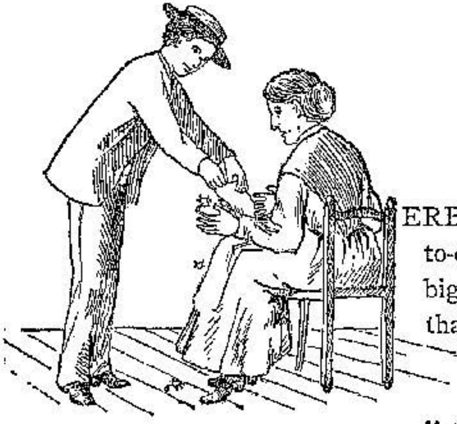
What a noble, kind act that was! Mrs. Trehorne said she never could go up into any such place as the lighthouse, now, without thinking of it, and I am sure none of us ever can that heard her tell the story.

Hannah sniffed terribly, just as she always does when a story has touched her, and then she began to pack away the remains of the lunch as fast as she could, and said "the capting told her not to be gone long, for wind and tide waited for no man, and the tide was ready." So we embarked once more, and were soon over on the north beach, where we picked up shells and heard the real sea — not the river — waves break upon the shore, until the long day began to draw to its close, and Hannah said it was time for sober folks to be at home.

P. S. — I think I am beginning to write a little more like older people. What my father said about use improving me is very true. Now that sentence about the day's drawing to its close is quite good.

CHAPTER XIV.

MAGGIE'S JOURNAL TELLS STORIES.

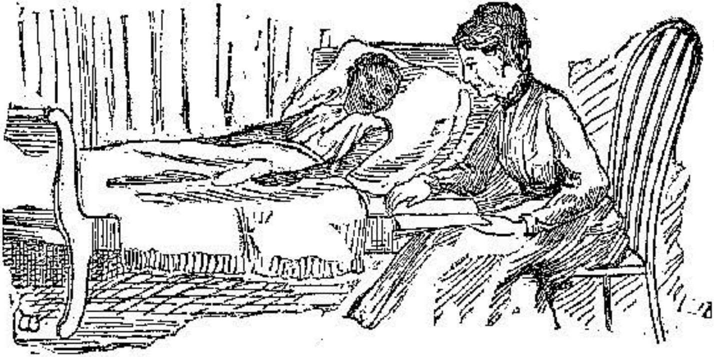


HERBERT came in to-day, bringing a big fruit in his hand that looked a little like a musk-melon and a little more like a water-melon, and not much like either. He said he had bought it of Mr. Atwood for twenty-five cents, and it was a paw-paw — a bread fruit. We cut it up in slices as we would a melon, and tried to eat it, but it was disagreeably sweet and nothing more. However, I could not rest until I had gone round to Mr. Atwood's to see the tree it grew on. It's a queer tree, — tall and slim, with the fruit growing close to the trunk, among the limbs. There were several varieties of the fruit, but if none of it tastes better than what we have tried, I don't envy people the eating it. We found Patience waiting to go round with us again, grinning and happy as ever. She showed us the citron tree, with the large fruit ripening fast. This tree is about the size of our quince bushes, has a glossy green leaf as every tree has here, it seems to me, and the citrons are about like our citron-melons, only more pointed. Here too we found sweet lemons and oranges of great variety. I mean some time to come to Florida and own an orange grove. Mr. Atwood has a nursery, a very large one, of little orange trees, which he sells. A tree will bear a few oranges in two years, and in seven it will be in good bearing; then, one peculiarity of the orange crop is that it is always a crop, which is very different from apples and pears. And I will have a house like an old — old plantation I went to see yesterday. That is what I am going to write about now. Juan took us to it; he takes us everywhere we want to go, and he grows more gentlemanly every day.

We went round by Charlie's, and who should be sitting there, reading, but Greta. She had a story book, and we heard Charlie laughing before we reached the house.

"What's that fellow up to, now?" Herbert said. "I reckon his leg don't hurt him much this morning."

"It done hurt," said Juan, "it 'most got well; he 'll be a-toting round, first thing, you know, Charlie will, and done broke him again!" Then Juan laughed as if such an event would be about the smartest and the funniest thing that could well happen.



Herbert took Charlie some canes to smooth, some orange-wood canes that he had bought at one of the stores. He is always contriving some amusement for the boy; and for doing these very well, Philip pays Charlie twenty-five cents apiece. Charlie earns his quarter almost every day, and we are getting a bundle of canes large enough to give a present to every man and boy we know at the North. Hannah says, "We shall have to charter an extra car to take them North."

When we came away, Charlie called out to Juan to be sure and show us the Cherokee rose, and well he might, for it was a curiosity indeed!

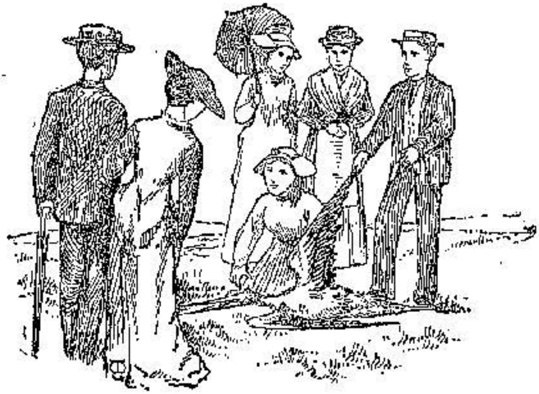
Such a shady old place as this plantation is; the fences around it are all down, and the hedges look as if they had never been trimmed. In old times there must have been nice drive-ways up to it, but they are all grass-grown now; only rows of old trees, planted avenue like, show you where they may have been.

When we went into the yard, the funniest little black and tan dog came and barked at us furiously, and in his wake there followed — what do you think? — a little bantam rooster, which flew at us and crowed in the most absurd way.

"Cock-a-doodle doo! Have you lost your shoe?" Herbert kept saying, with his head bent down in a sort of fighting way at the rooster, and the first thing he knew the creature was up on his shoulder and gave him a peck on the cheek which almost drew the blood. If it hadn't been too ridiculous to run away from such a little bit of a thing, I should have taken to my feet.

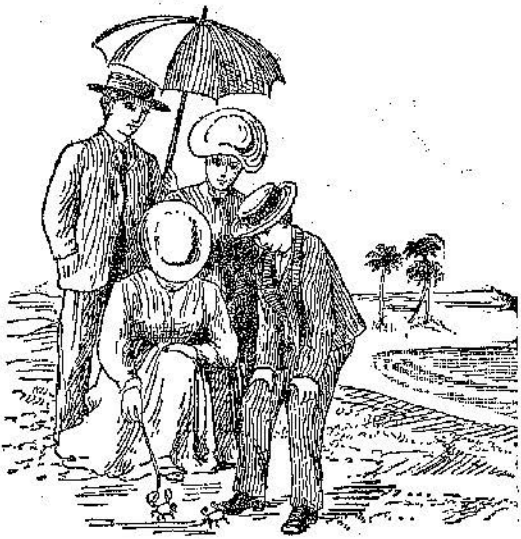
We went around to a side yard where there were trees laden with a very large bitter orange which is called shattuck, and Herbert bought one. It is as large as a very small pumpkin, and is grown for preserves. The ladies carve beautiful wreaths and forms of all kinds on its delicate pulp, then make it transparent. It tastes like citron when thus preserved. Here, too, we found a sago palm, which was a wonder to us. It grew about four feet high, had a stout trunk, and large palm leaves spreading out in the form of a circle around this trunk. The sago itself grew in the centre, on the top of the trunk, and looked to me as much like a mammoth cauliflower as anything else. I believe the sago seldom ripens here. A little frost nips it easily, as it does the large banana leaves; but after all it is a wonderful palm, and a very beautiful one. This specimen has been photographed repeatedly. I wish I could have an impression put right into my journal here. The old plantation house was like so many others, with a broad verandah and no end to the doors and windows. But this piazza was made of coquino, and looked as if it would stay as it is for another two hundred years. Juan said two hundred was the least age of the house. We went through large avenues full of oranges, and then Juan took us home by the Cherokee rose. Well, it is a wonder! It is immense, covers ever so much ground, and runs up to the top of some tall trees. It has a large single white rose, with rather coarse leaves, and little perfume, but the buds are pretty. Juan said everybody picked all they wanted, so we carried home our hands full, but mother said she would rather I should not do such a thing again without asking. She is very particular, and I am sure I don't know whom we could have asked for leave, unless it is the rooster or the dog: we saw no one beside.

We had to hunt for a place to get Beauty through the fence, for we wanted to come home by the San Sebastian and see the fiddlers. What are fiddlers? You wouldn't ask if you had been in St. Augustine. Herbert took out two old pieces of board, and let Beauty through the opening thus made, and such work as we had to put them back again! But we tugged and tugged until we succeeded; and then when we were on the road the first thing we saw was a big white heron lying dead. Juan took it right up, and said it must have been dropped by some one, for it had been shot only a short time, and that he would take it home, cure the wings, and give them to me for my winter hats — Northern girls bought lots of them.



Ever so many are shot here. Philip says every day he is going out gunning, but he don't seem to want to go anywhere unless Greta goes, which is all just as the fondest wishes could desire. What a nice brother Phil would make. I think I should like him much better than Herbert.

When we had gone a short distance on the road we came where the fiddlers were, and then didn't we have fun watching them. A fiddler is a sort of little crab, which runs one way as well as he does the other. He is black, and has some long white horns that he puts out and tries to nip you with, if you touch him. We put our feet over the round holes which they bore



the earth full of, and the creature would almost stand up and strike at us with those claws, as if he thought he could hurt us, and would like to if he could. Juan didn't seem in the least afraid of them. He took them right up in his hand, and let them crawl about everywhere. Herbert tied up a dozen of the biggest in his pocket-handkerchief, and said he meant to take them home for a present to Hannah, and so he did.

When we went home, Hannah was busy in the kitchen, but we went to the door and called, —

"Hannah!"

"What now?" said Hannah.

"Got a present for you."

"I've had enough of your presents," said Hannah, coming to the door, and looking sidewise at him.

"This is very nice. See here, now, put the handkerchief down flat on your lap and open it carefully."

For a wonder Hannah did as she was told, and in an instant the fiddlers were flying about the piazza in every direction.

"The land now!" Hannah said, only half vexed though, "What won't you be arter next!"

"Why, Hannah Gowan! all my fiddlers that I was going to preserve in alcohol and take North!"

"Take North!" repeated Hannah, in much contempt.

"Yes, take North, for a present to the museums of natural history in all the great cities, beginning with Charleston."

"You go 'long." That's what Hannah always says when she don't feel certain whether you are in joke or in earnest.

"No, the fiddlers have gone 'long, and that will do for one day," and to see Herbert you would have thought him sadly disappointed, but we had a good laugh over it afterwards. Hannah's face was a picture!

Feb. 12.—A picnic out under the great water oak, the mothers had promised us for a whole week before it came off. There are a large number of visitors here now, and the town is full of social life. There are whole families like ours, and we meet every day the nicest-looking girls and boys, that we are dying to know. Herbert speaks to the boys whenever he has a mind to, but I don't think it would be very ladylike to go talking to the big girls, unless we were introduced; still, yesterday, when we were walking on the sea-wall, we saw some young people down under it, picking up the sea mosses. They are not handsome here, though now and then you see a nice variety. Well, I couldn't help going down to see what they found. I didn't mean to speak to them, unless they spoke to me, but they did right off. A girl as big as I am offered me a pretty shell she had found, to look at, and of course I had to thank her when I returned it, and then the way was opened. We spent the whole morning down there together, and when we parted I told her about our picnic under the big water oak, and asked her to go to it. She said she should be happy to if her mother would let her. And when we came to the oak there she was, with three or four other children, waiting for us. Virginia Clay her name was, and the other girl's name was Philena Worth; one boy was Johnny Clay, and the other two were Fred and Tom Parton. They had a big basket of lunch, and proved to be real ladies and gentlemen; well-bred, mother said, and that's a great deal for my mother to say, she thinks good breeding means so much.

It was a famous tree, worth going a great distance to see. The trunk is — I have forgotten, but ever so many feet round, and from one end of the branches to the other made a famous long run. It grows in a private yard, quite near a house, so Philip went up to ask leave before we settled down under it for the day. We had our separate rooms, and really it was quite like colonizing. The mothers and Greta took their work, and Phil went on reading the book he reads to them at home. It was a very domestic scene. We children, of course, had our plays and a grand good time. Virginia knew ever so many new ones, and conundrums without end. Then we played "blind-man's buff," and "high spy." You see we could make as much noise as we pleased without disturbing any one, and Phil made up a roaring fire of bits of light wood he found around, to boil some tea for Greta, who had a little headache. We all sat down round it, after the tea was made, and played we were a gypsy encampment, and Stannie was a lord's little son whom we had stolen, and were going to keep until we could demand a great ransom for him. We like the new friends, and are going out on an alligator hunt, the first time we can find suitable company, with them. I wish Herbert wouldn't talk quite so much to Virginia though; he seemed to forget there was anybody else there; and I don't think it was very polite in him either to say to me, after we came home, —

"Henry Clay was once President of the United States — I mean he wanted to be and couldn't. I had no idea he was such a little chap, had you? Were you trying all day to make him forget how he lost the election? I thought you were; you stuck to him so!"

I was real vexed, and I snapped him up short. I can snap very short, Greta says, when I try, but she doesn't think I appear to much advantage when I do. I don't see how people can be thinking all the time of appearing to advantage; I can't bear to. It seems ruder in Herbert, now I have written it down, than it did before. I shall talk to Henry Clay as much as I please, and he may help himself if he can. I think Henry is a nice, gentlemanly boy, and I am sure he would never — no, never — say such rude things to me. I don't like Herbert so well as I used to, but Stannie is a darling.

Feb. 28. — "When you have done wrong, don't think you can obliterate the wrong by an apology." That's what my mother has said to me a thousand times, so I don't mean to put down a real apology here, only to state to my journal that I am very sorry for my negligence in not having written more faithfully, and I here record a promise that I will write a few words at least every day.

March 1. — Nothing particular has happened to-day.

2*d.* — A quiet day at home, sewing and reading.

3*d.* — Herbert and Charlie went fishing; I couldn't go.

4*th.* — Stannie not so well to-day; sent for the doctor.

5*th.* — Stannie no better.

6*th.* — Stannie no better yet.

7*th.* — Stannie sitting up to-day; offered me a ride on Beauty, but mother said my one ride on her would do.

8*th.* — Henry Clay and Herbert gone out in a boat; I wouldn't go; was a little cross!

9*th.* — To-morrow we go to the fort to take lessons in archery.

10*th.* — We went; bought some handsome bows and arrows and took our first lesson. There were quite a number of grown-up young ladies and gentlemen taking lessons too. They obviously thought us in the way, and we don't any of us want to shoot there again; beside, I couldn't make my arrows go anywhere near the mark; everybody laughed when they saw where they struck, and it is not pleasant to be laughed at. We are going to practice in our yard at home.

11th.—Archery is a humbug! I shoot at everything but the mark, so I gave my bows and arrows to Charlie, who hits it to a pin's point. Oh, I forgot to say Charlie is quite well now, only limps a little. Herbert hit an old hen and killed it, so he had to pay for it.

12th.—Every time I take up my pen I want to put something into my journal about the oranges, but that would be repetitious. I must, however, say here that never was anything more beautiful than these trees are now. They are not only covered with fruit, ripe fruit, what there is left of it, but there are wreaths of blossoms; under some of the trees the ground is as white as if it had snowed, from the fallen flower leaves. Will you think of these blossoms, and such lots of them! Our house is full of them. We can't go into the street but some little bits of colored children push huge bunches of them, for five or ten cents apiece, into our faces. The flowers of the wild orange are a trifle larger, and full as fragrant as the sweet, and these we can pick whenever we want them.

Around the Barracks there are long rows of them; and then on Mr. Ball's place. I have not written a word about this place, but I must just say how handsome it is. It was one of the oldest places here, and Mr. Ball, from New York, bought it, pulled down the old house, and put up a new one. Leading to this house are long avenues of the wild orange trees. These avenues form a perfect and densely shaded arch, and when they are in blossom you can't imagine what a delight it is to walk through the grounds. One night there was a party at the house, and the avenues were lighted by Chinese lanterns swung from the trees. "It was like fairy land," Greta said, and so it was.

CHAPTER XV.

ALLIGATOR HUNT.

CHARLIE kept hopping up and down before the windows of our dining-room this morning, when we were at breakfast, until Herbert went out to see what was wanted, and I heard Charlie say,—

"'Gator hunt to-day. Bill Patti's goin'. Says he done took you. Want ter?"

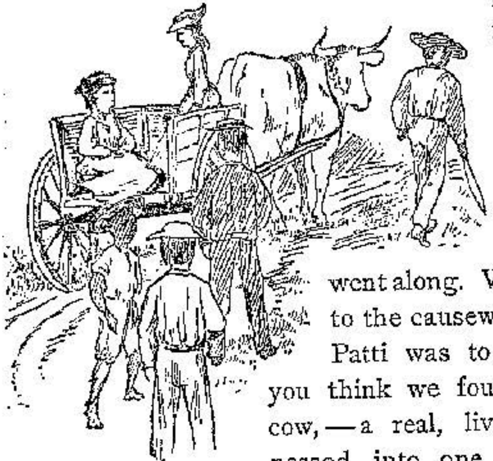
"Want ter?" Of course we did, though the mothers didn't quite like it. Mrs. Trehorne was afraid Stanhope would get too tired, and my mother said if Greta could go she shouldn't object, but as it was — Greta couldn't go. 'Gators of course live in the marshes, or on the side of streams, and we avoid all inland waters, even if they are brackish, for her. I tried to give it up good-naturedly, and not even to look or *feel* cross, for mother has told me a thousand thousand times, "To *be* is to look;" but I couldn't help the tears coming, so I turned my back upon all the rest, and tried to choke them down. I should have succeeded, and no one would have been the wiser, but Stannie has eyes all over his head, — I never saw such a child, — and pretty soon I felt his hand come stealing into mine. "I'll stay with you, Maggie," he said, "and you and I will take Beauty and go somewhere that's awfully nice."

"No you won't, Stanhope Trehorne," I answered, swallowing my tears so fast that they choked me. "You — you will just go and bring me home a baby alligator, and I'll pray all day as hard as I can that when I am born into another world, I may be a boy and not a girl." I had hardly got these words out of my mouth when I heard, —

"Maggie, your mother says you must put on your rubber boots and your water-proof, and take your lunch, and if you bring home any of them awful critturs, I hope you'll leave 'em outside the gate. I never see anything look more like pictures of the old sarpint that tempted Eve than them do."

"Oh, you dear, darling old Hannah!" and I put both arms round her neck, and hugged and kissed her until she turned red in the face. I write this so to record how quickly I was repaid for my attempt at a cheerful self-control. To be sure I cried, but then I meant to do it in a corner by myself, and should have if Stannie hadn't found me out.

I popped into the boots and water-proof before you could say Jack Robinson, and if there was a happier young girl in St. Augustine than I was this morning, I should like to have seen her.



Juan and Charlie and Henry Clay and Virginia — there, I knew some other girl would go — were at the gate waiting for us, and Stannie had a new red bridle for the pony, which made a great show as we went along. When we came to the causeway, where Bill Patti was to be, what do you think we found? Why, a cow, — a real, live cow, — harnessed into one of these top carts. Well, the carts and the cows and the mules and the steers that you meet in the streets here are the queerest things you ever saw. We had been wanting a ride in one of them, but Phil didn't like to have us go. He would get a carriage and two horses and drive any day, but not in one of these things, though Greta had said ever so many times she wanted one, and he was always willing to gratify her before.

Didn't we hop into this quick! All of us were going to, but Bill said "it was only for the ladies to ride out and the 'gators to ride home in." The cow was a black and white one, and was harnessed in just as a horse would have been. They use so little harness, and that mostly of old rope, that one of these vehicles passing through Washington Street would draw a crowd. I've seen a cart with the shafts made of long poles still covered with the bark, and the axle nothing but a rough beam. Anything that will hold together will run on these roads. It doesn't much matter whether you go on the roads or not, here; it is level everywhere, and there is even in the "pinies"— that's what they call the pine woods — so little underbrush, that it's just to turn your horse's or your cow's heads, and there you are.

We went straight out to the everglades. Bill said he knew a little creek there, where "the 'gators were as thick as spatter."

Such fields of palmettos, and — oh yes, it would have been a great forget to have left them out — the yellow jessamines that grew in such plenty over the trees as we went through them. These jessamines are the sweetest flowers in the world; even the orange flowers hardly rival them. They grow on a vine that climbs 'way up, up anywhere it can find a place to take hold of, and, if you are careful, you can pull them down a yard or two long, covered with these delicate hanging flowers. Herbert found an elegant wreath and gave it to Virginia, who put it all over her hat and let a bunch just fall on the back over to her black hair, where it did look like gold on ebony. I think Virginia is something of a flirt; but that isn't a very kind thing to say of any one, and my mother says if we don't say unkind things, we are much less likely to think them.

When Henry Clay saw what Herbert had done, he hunted round until he found a bunch for me, but my hair is brown and I knew they wouldn't show off so on me; beside, my hat was my biggest old sun-down, and the more trimmed it was the uglier it was. So I just said, "Thank you," and wreathed them round Beauty. What a beauty she was, with her chestnut hair that shines like a glass bottle, peeping up at you through the delicate green leaves and yellow blossoms! When we came to the place where we were to leave our cow and cart, we looked like a moving jessamine bower, we were so enwreathed.

Here we just took a bite; it's queer how hungry we are when there is one of Hannah's lunches to be found, and how little we think of eating when there is not. Here was plenty even for Bill, with a bit for the cow. Poor thing, she looked as if it would have taken a good many such baskets full to cover her bare bones!

As soon as we had lunched we followed Bill into a jungle. Bill and Charlie went first, then Juan and Herbert. Harry Clay hung even behind Beauty and Stanhope, which I thought didn't look very brave in him. I didn't expect to be brave, for I am only a girl, and I was scared half to death, but Virginia said she wasn't frightened a bit, and she didn't look as if she was. How I envied her!

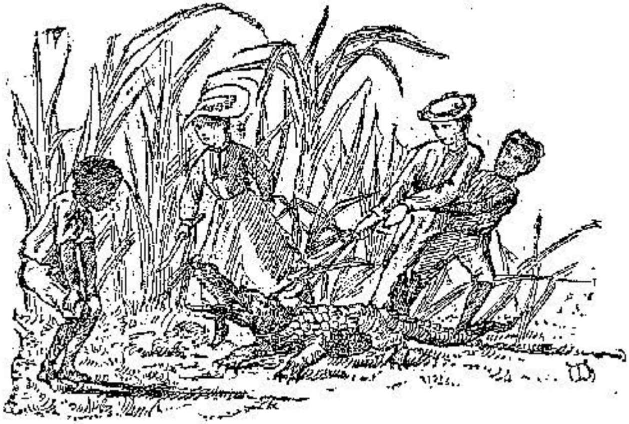
Pretty soon we heard Charlie scream. "Ky! Ky! Ky! dat dere's cotched. Ky! Ky! hold him fast! Look out dere, you Herbert, you fellar; he done bite yer. Look out dere! Ky! Ky!" I don't dare say I *didn't* turn and run, for I am afraid I did; but if I did, so did Henry Clay. I only know the first thing I knew was, we were holding fast on to each other, and the rest were nowhere to be seen.

"Where — where — where are *you* going to?" he was saying to me, holding me very tight.

"I don't know," I said. "Where are the others? Where's the alligator?" I continued, turning my head very quickly to see on which side he was chasing us.

"Poh; he aint anywhere," said Harry, letting alone of me, and turning suddenly on his heel. "Come on!" So we came on very carefully, looking under and over and around the bushes everywhere until we found where the others were.

"I say, Herbert!" Harry called, stopping at a safe distance, "have you caught him?" But Herbert was down on his hands and knees, looking into a hole, and didn't answer. So we went nearer and Harry called again: "I say, Herbert! what have you found?"



Then I couldn't stand it any longer, and down I went on my knees close by Herbert's side.

There was a big hole with ever so many little alligators in it. Oh, such funny little things as they were! and Bill was rolling up his sleeves to catch them. Just a few steps away there was an alligator about six feet long, tied with a great rope round his jaws and tail, and Charlie was holding the rope, shouting with delight as the big, ugly thing knocked first his head and then his tail against the ground. I hadn't seen it when I knelt down by Herbert, or I should never have dared go so near, and yet, there stood Virginia, no more afraid than if the 'gator had been "Mary's little lamb" tied with a blue ribbon. Oh! oh! oh! What an ugly-looking thing it was! It's dark green, covered with light orange spots, with a thin, long body, and a tail that is like a snake's. Then such ridiculous little feet! and they do sprawl so! But the most hideous thing is that mouth! It is as broad as half his body, it seemed to me, and when he opens it, which he does constantly, such teeth as he shows; who ever did invent using them for the thousand and one beautiful things we see in all the shops? Every now and then Charlie would loosen the rope round the mouth of this one, so we could see down its throat.

"I tell you what," Juan said, pretending to thrust his arm down it, "wouldn't a fellow's arm go quick. Once there was a boy out here 'gatoring, and he didn't see a big fellar coming up behind him until [then Juan snapped his own jaws, so we all started, and he only laughed] snap, and off went his leg, and down the 'gator's throat 'fore he could wink. Look at Beauty! Whoa, whoa!" Stannie had fastened Beauty to a tree near by, and had come up close to the hole with the rest of us. But the pony, wanting to to follow, had turned herself round until she caught sight of the alligator, and as the creature was just then flapping violently, it scared her so she was trying her best to break away. Charlie threw the rope that held the 'gator at Harry, who ran away from it, leaving it loose on the ground, and, jumping over the hole, had hold of Beauty's bridle in a moment. In the jump, however, he hurt his broken leg, so he threw himself down and began to moan and cry piteously. How scared we all were. I thought a 'gator hidden in the grass had bitten him, and Harry Clay ran away. That boy must be a coward, I am afraid. Bill had Charlie up in his arms in a minute, and then we found it wasn't much, only a sudden hurt, but the negro boys do make such an outcry over everything. I never heard the like. Before we could turn round, Charlie was over this, and it wasn't with the fright. In the mean time, the 'gator was making the most of his freedom, and was running off for a distant hole in the swamp with all his might. If there ever was an awkward creature, this is the one. We all had to stand and laugh as he went, and that we could afford to do, because he was going *away* from us. Herbert was the first one to catch hold of the end of the rope; and then, when he felt the pull, the 'gator turned on him. Didn't we scream! Stannie says he never was so frightened in his life, but Herbert just doubled and doubled, as if it was the best fun in the world, and Bill Patti, instead of going to his help, stood still, clapped his hands on his knees, and laughed; but it was scary for all that. Then, when Herbert was getting out of breath, Bill took the rope and wound it round the creature. Juan drove the cow up close to where it was, and they tugged and tugged, until at last they threw him fairly into the cart and tied him down.

"Soft seat for you ladies to ride on in dar," Bill said, laughing and patting the flat, wet side of the creature. How the thing rolled his eyes round; why, they looked like great balls of fire, it was so angry!

Then they began to gather the little alligators into a box they had brought on purpose, and by and by Herbert would pick them up and hold them by the back of their necks as freely as any of the others. He isn't a bit of a coward, and that's the reason I like him so much better than I do Henry Clay. But then Virginia is bolder than I am, and that may be the reason he likes her so much better than he likes me.

After we had picked up every 'gator, we all went egg hunting. Alligator eggs bring a good price in the shops. We have bought a number of them to take home with us for twenty-five cents apiece. They are about as large as a duck's egg, and are spotted with brown — quite a handsome egg, when you don't think what is in it.

We looked, and looked, and looked, until I was tired almost to death, without finding a thing, until suddenly Juan called out, —

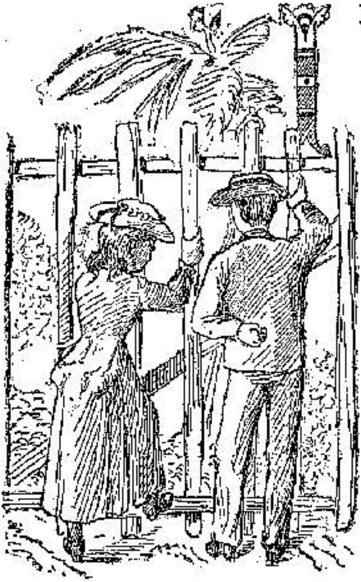
"Here! he, he! here! he, he!" and we all rushed to a spot close down by a deep ditch, half full of mud and water. Sure enough, there were six eggs! One of them was broken, but the others were perfect, and Juan gave them to us for a present. Herbert took out his purse to pay him, but he wouldn't touch a cent. I shall keep my egg as long as I live.

When we had found the eggs we began to want to go home, — and the question was how? Charlie's leg troubled him so that he must ride, and so they put an old board over the back of the 'gator, and on it he jumped, not in the least afraid. There was nothing for it but Virginia and I must walk, so we made the best of it, and were more than half-way home, when we saw a carriage coming towards us, and inside of it Greta and Phil. If I ever was thankful, I was then, for my rubber boots had grown very heavy, or my feet very tired, I couldn't quite tell which.

Hannah growled when we came home with our little 'gators, — we had one apiece, — but we didn't care. We put them in her best clothes-tub, and blew our eggs into her best tin pail. Greta says she will scour it with ashes to get it clean all the time now until we go home. Our eggs are on a bracket in our parlor. We are getting up a regular museum. Mother says the only trouble is how to get it safely home; that it is really valuable, and will be a great amusement to me one of these days. But I tell you what, of all our grand good times, none has been better than this alligator hunt, only I can't help laughing when I think what a — coward Henry Clay is! I told Greta about it, and she said he was probably a city boy who was unused to any but city sights; but so is Herbert. However, Greta always has a kind, excusing word to say about everybody, and that is what makes people love her so well. "A kind, good heart," mother says, "is worth more than millions of money in this world," and perhaps it is — mother knows best.

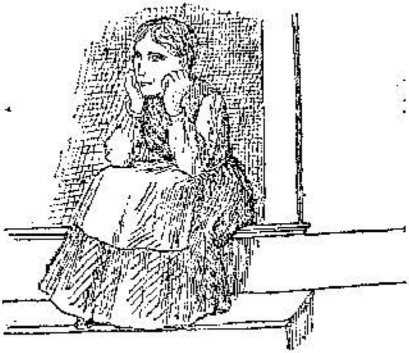
CHAPTER XVI.

FAREWELL, FLORIDA!



I HAVEN'T written yet about the colored Sabbath School that Greta has on her own hook. She always wants to be doing good wherever she is, and couldn't take a class in the regular Sabbath School because the services are rather long for her, and she would get too tired; so every Sunday afternoon she has about a dozen colored children come to our dining-room. Now, Greta always did have the nicest Sabbath School classes in the world; she don't teach in a prim way—question and answer—but she gets right hold of you, and makes you feel ever so happy if you have been good, and so sorry if you have not.

Phil always manages to be near when the class are here, so he can listen to what is going on, and he often helps them in their singing — so do we all, for the matter of that! These children that come here are the funniest little tots — Charlie is one, though, and he's big — but there are two little boys who come, with the shiningest of faces and the biggest of jackets; they are as bright as buttons and always know their lessons. The delightful thing, though, is their singing. Part of the class sing alto; they do it because they can't help it; and such rich voices. I wonder what there is in St. Augustine that makes every voice sweet and soft and rich. We just sit and listen, and say "More! more! more!" as if what the children came for was our amusement. It's funny to watch Hannah: she comes to the door, puts her elbows on her knees, and her chin in the palms of her hands and there sits, a half-hour at a time, watching them; then she always has some little treat for them — a plate of cakes, or a few nice tarts, and, invariably, a big orange apiece. Hannah is kind, at least. Greta is going to give them all presents when she goes away. Oh



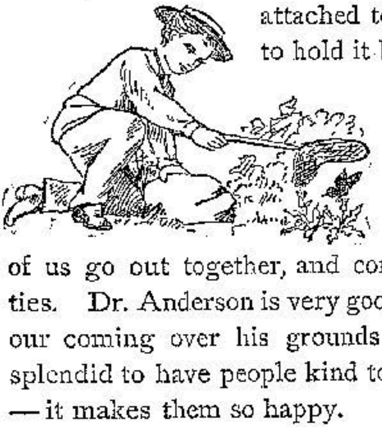
dear, there is to be a going away some time, I suppose, but then it is to go home. Mother proposes to take Ida with her, and Ida's grandmother hasn't the least objection in the world. Ida worships the very ground Greta treads on, so there is no doubt she will be very willing to go.

March 15. — Been at the fort all day to-day, and seen a pappoose, a real nice little girl. I carried her my pocket-full of candy, which she seemed to enjoy, only she swallowed it down as if she was eating bread. I asked her to come and see me, and she shook her head violently and made up an awful face. I don't think she can be very amiable. We went in to hear the Indians sing and repeat the Lord's Prayer. Herbert laughed, and Phil told him "if he couldn't behave like a gentleman, he had better never go there again;" but Herbert has become very intimate with one of the young Indians, with a long, hard name, and goes to see him almost every day. The Indian has taught him how to shoot, so Herbert can hit a bird on the wing; he is very proud of it. I am always scary where the Indians are, and don't like to go to the fort as well as the others do, but I am going to see the war dance some time.

March 16. — Now, here is something worth putting into my journal! There is a farm, as we should call it at the North, where every living thing seems to become tamed at once. We all went out to it to-day.

It is a regular plantation house, away from all others, and the birds which live in the woods around have become so tame that when the mistress of the house goes out and calls them, they flock to her from all directions! They light on her hands and her head, and eat out of her mouth even. Her poultry, too, do the same thing. She will call, "Nancy, come here!" and out from a flock of hens, Miss Gray-feathered Nancy will walk up to her and go just where she bids her; or "Dick, walk out here!" and Master Dick, head erect, and comb as red as the reddest, struts up before us all, as proud as a peacock. She has tamed them in this way, she says, by kindness; but there are not nearly as many now as there used to be, before people got a notion of coming down there to shoot. It was an easy shot, they were so trustful they wouldn't take the trouble to fly. Stanhope thought he should like to live there always, and quite teased his mother to let him go out and board for a month, — but he would be homesick enough. He grows so much stronger that he begins to have red cheeks, and he never weighed so much before in his life.

April 3d. — There, I meant so certainly to write every day of my life. If any one had told me I shouldn't, it would have been quite an insult; but here it is two weeks, and not a word in my journal. Well, all St. Augustine has been in blossom, new flowers to see every day, and new people. The town is full of company, and those Clays are never contented to go anywhere without us. The mothers, too, are acquainted now with their mother, and so we make large family parties on some excursion frequently. If you would just come up into my room and see the things I have gathered, butterflies and all. Now that the orange trees are in full blossom, there is no end to the splendid butterflies that are around, and we have a hoop with a thin cloth bag attached to it, and a long handle to hold it by; then, when we can get near enough to a butterfly, we throw the net over it — Land, there it is!



Sometimes a dozen of us go out together, and come home with quantities. Dr. Anderson is very good to us, and don't mind our coming over his grounds every day. It's just splendid to have people kind to children in this world — it makes them so happy.

I don't know much about these butterflies scientifically, but I am going to study about them when I go home. A boy's mother was with him catching them the other day, and she said "they were moths;" but I don't know the difference, though I thought it would seem too ignorant if I told her so. Some of my butterflies would measure six inches from tip to tip;

some look as if they would more, but I don't like to measure for fear of hurting them. Then, to-day I had a magnolia given me. Have I ever written about these magnolia trees? We have a small one in our garden, but that is nothing. There is a young lady who lives in a beautiful place in King Street, and my sister Greta knows her, so one morning when we were sitting at breakfast, there was a tap on the door, and Phil went to it. We heard the young lady's voice, and knew something nice had come, so were all on the alert when the door opened and in came Phil, bringing this magnificent white flower — but first let me tell you about the tree. It is as large and not unlike in shape to our horse-chestnut, but the leaves are perfect glories. They are slim and pointed, of a deep velvet green, glossy as satin; but this flower — this flower! It is thick and white like a calla, cup-shaped, and with a fragrance that filled the whole house.

"I wouldn't kneel down and worship it now," Hannah said, when I was down on my knees before the little round table on which Phil had put it, so that I could look down into it.

"I don't mean quite to," I said, laughing and jumping up, "but I had rather worship this than any other flower I ever saw." I bought a picture of it, as the flower fades after a few hours, when wholly blown, and is too thick to press.

April 6th. — Herbert came running in to-day, calling as loud as he could scream, —

"Maggie, Maggie! put your hat on and come as quickly as you can!"

I was sewing my hour's sew that I have to do every day, but down my work went on the floor, and I was off the door-steps in a jiffy. "What's a jiffy?" Why, don't you know? I know just as easy.

"Where — what! Herbert, where are you?" for he was nowhere to be seen. Then I heard a low whistle, a provoking way he has of calling me, just as if I was a little puppy, and the worst part of it is I know there is something pleasant going on, so I always follow him. Now I ran fast for fear I should lose the fun, and caught sight of him half hidden behind an old coquino wall. There he waited for me, and then he wouldn't tell me what he wanted, but took me round several streets, until he came to Dr. Bronson's house on the Plaza, then he just stopped, and stretched his arm through the fence and said, "There."

Well, there was no end to the there's there were there; so I looked at the elegant roses, myriads of them all up and down the front walk — at the tuberoses by the hundreds on their long stalks; at the hyacinths and the geraniums and the japonicas; and there was no end to it, and still there was Herbert's provoking old arm saying, "No, not that — not that." But not what? — and he just snickering because I couldn't find the right thing. I do so hate to be snickered at, and I began to feel — a little warm, we'll say — when I looked up, and there it was!

If you have never seen a palm tree, it's worth coming to St. Augustine to see this one in Dr. Bronson's front yard. I don't know anything about feet, to tell you how high it is; but there is the rough, scaly trunk, bare of limbs till it gets way up above all the other trees, and then begin to come those great leaves, eight, ten, twelve, I'm sure I don't know how long, but a long stem, and then their pointed leaflets crowning the top, "regally," Greta says, and she always gets the right word in the right place.

Now, to crown this crown, was a bunch of blossoms more than a foot long,— yes, nearer two — and delicate as a lily of the valley.

"Oh my, Herbert! Oh, dear me! Oh, Herbert Trehorne!" he says I kept saying; perhaps I did; I don't know, but I never was so surprised. I didn't suppose such a tree could have a blossom. I thought it was just perfect enough in itself not to need anything else, but there it was.

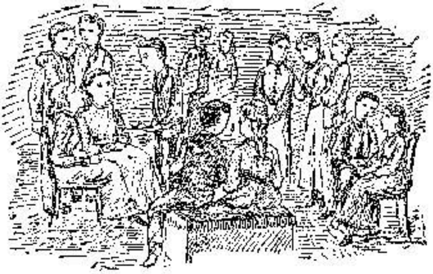
"Come along," said Herbert, after he was tired hearing me exclaim; so along we went, though I don't think it was a very polite way of inviting me, until we came to a store where they make photographs, and there in the window was one of these very flowers. The man had been taking its photograph.

Of course we looked, and looked, and looked at it, then went in and bought a copy, and then the way I ran home to bring them all down to see it wasn't slow. Didn't they enjoy it, though!

April 12th. — They are all going to the Ocklawaha to-day, but Herbert, Stannie, and Maggie; we poor children are to stay at home. Mother called me last evening into her room and said, "Maggie, I have a great disappointment for you. I have determined to go to the Ocklawaha and leave you at home." This is the way she always does, tells me the worst first; then, when I am feeling as bad as ever I can, she begins to make it a little and a little better, until she ends by making me very happy. So now she said that Mrs. Trehorne was afraid to take Stannie; the boat was small and hot, and the fatigue great; that he was doing so well where he was, she didn't want to do a thing that might possibly put him back, and she would stay with him herself; but he is such a generous little fellow it would make him very unhappy to have her, so she was going to leave Herbert with him, and Hannah would have the care of him.

Mother says she asked if it would make the boys any happier to have me stay at home, and Mrs. Trehorne said, "Of course, they would be perfectly content then; but I wouldn't on any account ask such a thing." Then mother looked in my face, as if she supposed, of course, I should have but one answer to make.

I hid my face in both my hands so she couldn't see it, and cried a little cry all to myself, and she just went quietly on with her sewing, giving me time to take it out; then I said, "Yes 'm," and she kissed me, without saying a word, and that is all there is about it.



April 20. — They have been gone two days, and we are having a right royal time. Juan came in to tea last night, and Charlie has been fed every meal, but that is Hannah's doings. Hannah is as good as pie to us. We have Henry Clay, Virginia Clay, Eustes Snow, Edward Martin, Susan Cox, Etta Graves, Zulu Blunt, George Noble, Sam Pitts, Fred Snow, Esther Norris, Lander Frost, Charlie True, and Gus Browne here to tea. It almost seems like a party when I write the names all down; but the mothers wouldn't like us to have a party, so we told Hannah we would only ask a *few* of our dearest friends.

April 21. — They all came! It was so funny to see

Hannah open her eyes, as one after the other came up to the door and took off their hats, but she had plenty for us all to eat, and the boys *did* eat tremendously. We tried to behave like grown-up people, so Hannah need not think we had betrayed the confidence she reposed in us; but I don't know as we exactly succeeded, — perhaps I had better not write much more about it.

April 25. — They are all home safe, and had a most charming time. Such stories as they tell! If I could only copy out of Greta's journal, what a page it would make! I wonder if she doesn't put something in it about Phil, that she won't let me see it now as often as she used to. *I* think they really and truly do love each other. I wish I dared to ask my mother, but if I did, she would say gravely, "Don't be foolish, Maggie."

Now, we are to go home next week. I want to go, and yet it breaks my heart to leave St. Augustine.

May 1. — To-morrow we go; we are all packed. I have been round to say good-by to my dear, dear, *dear* friends. Oh, my darling Miss M., whom I have learned to love with my whole heart, you precious, precious, precious friend; never, no never shall I find any one to fill your place! How kind you have been to us; how many nice rides you have given Greta, and even me; how many beautiful flowers you have sent us; and how many delicious raised biscuits!

I love you tenderly. I love even your dog your cow, your horse, your house, your very little pony chaise that looks as if it carried only happy, good, cheerful, merry-hearted people; never — oh, never — shall I see your like again! Never — oh, never — feel my heart's deepest affections so riveted upon. There's Herbert calling me.

May 2. — My last entry in my journal. Our grand, good time is over. We have taken our passage in the "Champion," from Charleston to New York, and this very afternoon, at two, go to Tacoi, to embark on board the "City Point."

Dear old St. Augustine, a long and last farewell!

P. S. — I don't feel certain about Greta and Phil; I wish I did.

P. S. No. 2. — I ought, in justice to the boys, to say that I have found them far pleasanter than I anticipated, especially Stannie, who has sent Beauty North.

P. S. No. 3. — Greta is well. Stannie is much improved; and as that was what we came to St. Augustine for, perhaps that had better be the last sentence I write.

Good-by, dear old journal.

P. S. No. 4. — Charlie is a changed boy; Juan

Lopez is very nice; Virginia Clay is prettier than ever; Harry is — a coward, and I hope we shall see Sam and Bill and the boat at Jacksonville.

P. S. No. 5. — Farewell to Florida!

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